THE
BHĀRATA WAR AND PURĀṆIC GENEALOGIES

Edited by

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PREFACE

The third series of Lectures and Seminars at the Centre of Advanced Study in Ancient Indian History and Culture, University of Calcutta, was held in the month of September, 1965. The six Lectures were delivered by Dr. B. B. Mazumdar of Patna on 'Kṛṣṇa in History and Legend', and they are now expected to come out of the press in a few weeks' time. The two days' Seminars were held on (1) 'The Bhārata War', and (2) 'Purāṇic Genealogies', under the chairmanship of Dr. R. C. Majumdar of Calcutta.

A number of Indian Universities were invited to send their representatives to participate in the Seminars, though the delegates of only some of them read papers and took part in the deliberations. The representatives of a few Universities submitted their papers, but could not attend the Seminars.

The articles have been incorporated in the volume without substantial change, though, for various reasons, a few of them were left out.

The proceedings have been compiled from notes submitted by the Reporters. Dr. S. Bandyopadhyay, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre, has given me considerable help in this matter, while the Index has been prepared by Dr. A. K. Chatterjee and Sri Bijay Pratap Mishra, Junior Research Fellows. My sincere thanks are due to all of them.

Centre of Advanced Study,
Dept. of Ancient Indian History and Culture,
University of Calcutta,
27th January, 1969.

D. C. Sircar
Director

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PART I

THE BHĀRATA WAR

Proceedings of the Seminar

First Day

Date : 17th September, 1965
Time : 10 A.M. to 1 P.M., and 2 P.M. to 5 P.M.
Subject : The Bhārata War.
Place : Asutosh Hall, University of Calcutta.

President : Dr. R. C. Majumdar, formerly Professor of History, Dacca University.

Participants :—

Prof. M. Rama Rao	Sri Venkatesvara University, Tirupati
Prof. B. P. Sinha	Patna University
Dr. B. B. Mazumdar	Do.
Sri D. K. Ganguly	Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan
Sri B. D. Chatterjee	Burdwan University
Prof. D. C. Sircar	Calcutta University
Dr. S. R. Das	Do.
Dr. A. N. Lahiri	Do.
Dr. S. R. Banerjee	Centre of Advanced Study in Ancient Indian History and Culture, Calcutta University
Sri R. K. Bhattacharya	Do.
Sri N. N. Bhattacharya	Chinsurah, Hooghly District, West Bengal
Sri A. K. Chakravarty and others.	Calcutta

Reporters : Sm. G. Dasgupta, Sm. M. Ray, Sri S. Dutta and Sri S. P. Singh

Morning Session

Prof. D. C. Sircar, Director of the Centre of Advanced Study, welcomed Dr. R. C. Majumdar, the representatives of the different universities and other scholars who came to attend the Seminars. He pointed out how the representatives of several universities had given up the idea of attending the Seminars at the eleventh hour owing to the somewhat uncertain political situation created by the tension between our country and Pakistan. He also observed how Dr. A. D. Pusalker of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, had been originally invited to preside over the deliberations of the Seminars and how, when he declined the invitation, Dr. R. C. Majumdar was invited to act as President and was good enough to accept the invitation. Prof. Sircar expressed his thankfulness especially to Dr. Majumdar as well as to Professors Rama Rao and B. P. Sinha and to the other sholars who had come to attend the Seminars as the representatives of various universities. He hoped that their participation and also the presence of a number of local scholars would make the Seminars a success. He then invited Dr. Majumdar to occupy the chair.

Dr. R. C. Majumdar occupied the chair and introduced the problems relating to the subject of the Seminar by reading out his paper entitled 'Date of the Bhārata War' in which the different mutually conflicting traditions regarding the date were discussed in order to show that it is difficult to determine the correct date.

After reading out his introductory paper, Dr. Majumdar observed that, since several of the papers contributed by different participants were likely to cover more or less the same field, it would be better if the papers were read in the morning session and the discussions on the various issues raised by them were taken up in the afternoon. This proposal was accepted by the house. Dr. Majumdar then invited Prof. D. C. Sircar to read out his paper entitled 'Myth of the Great Bhārata War'. In it, Prof. Sircar emphasised the conflicting and highly improbable nature of the evidence at our disposal and tried to prove that, if the war was really fought at all, it must have originally

been a petty family or tribal feud which was the subject of a popular battle song that was magnified, in several centuries by various minstrels, into the great war poem of the *Mahābhārata*. In his opinion, there was no 'great war' and it is impossible to determine its date.

Prof. B. P. Sinha then read his paper dealing with the great part played by Kṛṣṇa in the Kurukṣetra war. The lengthy paper of Dr. S. R. Das, entitled 'The *Mahābhārata* and Archaeology' sought to prove *inter alia* that the excavations at Hastināpura did not throw any specific light on the evidence of the Great Epic. Dr. S. R. Banerjee next discussed the points of similarity between the description of the Kurukṣetra war in the *Mahābhārata* and that of the Trojan war in the *Iliad*. Sri N. N. Bhattacharya then read his paper in which he tried to support the view that the Pāṇḍavas did not really belong to the Kuru clan and that they did not take part in the Kurukṣetra war which was fought between the Kauravas and the Pāñcālas. Sri R. K. Bhattacharya read two papers, the first on the date and the second on the venue of the Bhārata war.

Afternoon Session

Discussion on the papers read at the morning session was taken up in the afternoon session which commenced at 2 P.M., after a break of one hour for lunch.

Dr. B. B. Mazumdar raised the following points—

(i) whether the Bhārata war did at all take place;

(ii) whether the *Gītā* could have been composed by Kṛṣṇa in the manner suggested in the *Mahābhārata*; and

(iii) whether it is correct to say that the *Gītā* is an Upaniṣad.

As regards his first question, Dr. Mazumdar himself observed that the absence of any mention of the Bhārata War in the Vedic literature does not prove that it did not take place. With regard to his second question, he opined that the composition of the *Gītā* in the midst of a war appears to be psychologically impossible and as such, according to him, the *Gītā* is a later interpolation.

As regards the question how far the *Gītā* is an Upaniṣad, Prof. D. C. Sircar pointed out that the language of the *Gītā* is not similar to that of the Upaniṣads and therefore the *Gītā* should not be taken to be an Upaniṣad though, according to him, it could be regarded as the modification of an Upaniṣadic text. He agreed with Dr. Mazumdar that the *Gītā* could not have been composed on the battle-field.

Regarding the absence of any mention of the Bhārata War in the Vedic literature, Dr. R. C. Majumdar observed that the said literature is vast and that only parts of it have so far been recovered. Prof. Rama Rao then gave his opinion in favour of the historicity of the Bhārata War. According to him, archaeology (which is still in its speculative stage) being of no help in this respect, emphasis should be put on the evidence supplied by the different Purāṇas. He referred to the three great events which he considered to be historical facts—(i) commencement of the Kali age in 3102 B.C., (ii) birth of Parīkṣit, and (iii) the breaking out of the Bhārata War. He further stated that, if the Purāṇic accounts of the durations of dynasties can be reconciled and a backward calculation from the accession of Candragupta Maurya is made, then the problem of dating the Bhārata War may be easier. He admitted, however, that the dynastic information supplied by the different Purāṇas often differ from one another, but expected that scholars should attempt at some compromise in the cases of discrepancies in order to arrive at an approximate date.

Prof. D. C. Sircar, however, did not agree with Prof. Rama Rao and observed that the Purāṇic accounts are quite worthless so far as epic history is concerned. He also stated that it is not possible to calculate the date of the war from the Purāṇic evidences which are mutually conflicting and also go against astronomical calculations and against the traditions recorded in the Eastern Cālukya inscriptions, the *Kathāsaritsāgara* and Jain literature. According to him, there cannot be a compromise between evidence and no-evidence as between light and darkness.

Prof. Rama Rao, however, insisted that a thorough and systematic study of the Purāṇic accounts may remove the apparent inconsistencies in them and reveal the truth.

Prof. B. P. Sinha was also of the opinion that traditions have some truth in them and that the history of all ancient civilisations owes a lot to traditions. In this connection, he pointed out that the great epics *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were considered as based on imagination until recently. Not long ago again 'the Sumerian king' was treated as an imaginary figure. Archaeology has, however, revealed the truth. Incidentally referring to Dr. Das's paper, Prof. Sinha said that Dr. Das's dating of the Painted Grey Ware in the Bombay Laboratory to 400 B.C. is not correct, 1000 B.C. being the correct date according to him. He observed that a backward calculation in fixing up the date of a certain event is not always a very scientific approach and hence historians should build up the chronology of the Bhārata War on the basis of the dates of the Aryan kings suggested by the Vedic literature. Prof. Sinha thought that the approximate date of the Bhārata War is between 1500 and 1400 B.C. As regards the magnitude of the war, Prof. Sinha observed that it was indeed a great event, but not such a horrible catastrophe as it has been made by the poets and writers of later ages.

Prof. Sircar, however, observed that the *Mahābhārata* story is obviously a myth since such a large number of people as 18 *akṣauhiṇīs* (the number of soldiers taking part in the Kurukṣetra war on both sides according to the epic story) could not be assembled together in a single battle-field, nor was it possible for the commanders to direct the activities of such a huge crowd in an age of hand-to-hand fight. It is also impossible, in Prof. Sircar's opinion, to accept, as a historical fact, the participation of all the kings of all parts of India in the Kurukṣetra War before the Later Vedic age when the easternmost and southernmost areas of the country were unknown to the people of the western half of Northern India.

Prof. Rama Rao disagreed with Prof. Sircar and stated that it required a very serious study and critical examination of the available data to come to such a conclusion.

Sri A. K. Chakravarty was of the opinion that, though we are not sure about the magnitude of the Bhārata War, there is no doubt that it was a great historical event and not a myth. Sri R. K. Bhattacharya argued that the conflicts and contradictions, which are indeed many in the *Mahābhārata*, are all due to the errors of the copyists.

Dr. R. C. Majumdar observed that scholars engaged in Indological studies are confronted with many conflicting theories; but that does not necessarily prove that all of them are useless. According to him, in spite of the defective nature of the Purāṇic accounts, scholars should not reject or ignore them in a hurry. Dr. Majumdar said that the view of Prof. Sircar that the Purāṇic tradition is no evidence so far as history is concerned cannot be supported. He stated that scholars must approach the Purāṇas for historical evidence, though conclusions should be reached after critical analysis of the accounts. If any Purāṇic account gets support from any other source, then that account may be regarded as historical and the account, which finds no corroboration from any other source, may be set aside for the present moment. Dr. Majumdar, however, admitted that the date of the Bhārata War cannot be determined with certainty with the help of available data.

Prof. D. C. Sircar remarked that he had been partly misunderstood since he had not said that the Purāṇic accounts are of no value. Though they are conflicting in many respects, the accounts are not altogether useless at least in some cases. But, in his opinion, the Purāṇic traditions offer us no help in respect of the question of the Bhārata War. As regards the nature and magnitude of the war, he contended that originally it was a family feud or a tribal struggle and that its description as found in the *Mahābhārata* is no better than a myth and has no historical value. Moreover, he argued, the state of Aryan knowledge of Indian geography in the age in question has to be taken into consideration. It is significant to note, he pointed out, that even Pāṇini (5th century B.C.) did not know the southern and eastern parts of India. He drew attention to what he had said earlier that, in the days of hand-to-hand fight, it was quite impossible to conduct a battle with

a huge army so that the story of the Kurukṣetra war is absurd on the face of it. Prof. Rama Rao, however, stated that Kṛṣṇa was a great politician and diplomat and it was not impossible for him to guide such a war. Prof. Sircar then drew attention to the fact that the Later Vedic literature knew Kurukṣetra quite well, but only as a holy place and not as the venue of a war. Prof. B. P. Sinha, however, observed that the absence of the mention of anything in works like Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* is not of great importance.

Prof. Sircar then pointed out that the difference between himself and the other scholars was due to the different approach to the meaning of the word *itihāsa* which, in his opinion has been generally misunderstood. Dr. B. B. Mazumdar opined that, if Ferishta's work is history, then the *Mahābhārata*, called *itihāsa*, is also history. Dr. R. C. Majumdar remarked that *itihāsa* has been taken to be a historical legend. Prof. Sircar quoted the following stanza from the *Mahābhārata* (XII. 84. 1)—

ath=āpy=udāharant=īmām=itihāsaṁ purātanam |
Bṛhaspateś=ca saṁvādaṁ Śakrasya ca Yudhiṣṭhira ||

and observed that the dialogue between the king of the gods and their preceptor, called here an *itihāsa*, was certainly not a historical legend, but was obviously a myth. Prof. Sircar also referred to the Arjuna-Kṛṣṇa *saṁvāda* of the *Gītā* and said that Arjuna is stated to have felt sorry about killing his kins, which Kṛṣṇa persuaded him to do. In his opinion, the story may be an *itihāsa*, but no history.

Sri B. D. Chatterjee observed that the excavations at Hastināpura had not been conducted at the place where the Kurukṣetra war was fought and that this fact explains why it has not yielded anything relating to the war. Dr. R. C. Majumdar pointed out that the evidence of the said archaeological excavations has been of a negative charcater since it has not proved or disproved the Bhārata War. Dr. A. N. Lahiri wanted to know whether the archaeological excavations at Hastināpura indicate the real site of the *Mahābhārata* culture or not. Dr. Majumdar said that the archaeological data have not helped us in tracing the said culture. Regarding the nature

of the *Mahābhārata* culture, Prof. Sircar observed that it represented both rural and urban culture.

Prof. Sircar then thanked Dr. R. C. Majumdar, Prof. M. Rama Rao, Prof. B. P. Sinha, Dr. B. B. Mazumdar and the delegates representing the various Indian universities as well as those who participated in the Seminar either by offering comments and making observations or by paying a patient hearing to the deliberations. In his concluding remarks, he expressed regret for holding views in disagreement with most of the participants in the Seminar. He again stated that he had never denied totally the importance of the Purāṇic accounts for the reconstruction of ancient Indian history, his contention being that, so far as the date of the *Mahābhārata* war and the connected problems are concerned, he regarded the Purāṇic accounts as useless since the genealogy of the epic kings preserved in the Purāṇic literature cannot be reconciled with the theory of Aryan advent into India and the date of the Indus Valley civilization. Once again he thanked all the scholars participating in the Seminar and especially Dr. R. C. Majumdar who was so kind as to preside over the deliberations and to conduct them with great skill.

I

The Bhārata War

R. C. Majumdar, Calcutta

The war between the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas, which forms the central theme of the *Mahābhārata*, has been regarded in the ancient traditions as the dividing line between the two great aeons or epochs—the Kali and the Dvāpara *yugas*, i.e. the present and the past, the two previous aeons, the Satya and the Tretā, being more theoretical than practical. The pertinacity with which this tradition has not only been accepted in theory, but worked in practice leaves no doubt that it was not a mere figment of imagination, but some great event, like the two World Wars of the present century, which brought about a radical change in Indian history and culture. As a matter of fact, the Purāṇas distinctly assert that the Bhārata War ushered in a new political age and a new epoch of degradation and degeneration from the cultural point of view.

But, even if we regard the War as a historical fact, it does not necessarily follow that all the details described in the *Mahābhārata* regarding the causes and incidents of the War, such as its antiquity, the events leading to it, and the peoples and nations taking part in it, were also authentic. A review of the Bhārata War involves a discussion on all these points. But the most important and the most controversial point is the date of the War, which may be looked upon as the sheet-anchor in the chronology of the political and cultural history of ancient India.

The Indologists have, therefore, turned their attention from a very early period to fix the date of the Bhārata War. A great deal has been written upon this subject but as yet there is no consensus of opinion, and the various theories, based on different lines of approach, diverge widely from one another.

I presume that this will form the principal topic of discussion also in this Seminar, and in order to facilitate its progress, I would like to indicate, at the very outset, the different lines of evidence chosen by different scholars, and the general nature of the results achieved by them.

The first line of evidence is furnished by definite and specific statements, both epigraphic and literary, about the date of the War. The only epigraphic statement is the one contained in the Aihole inscription, dated in Śaka 556, that 3735 years had then elapsed since the Bhārata War. This gives us 3102 B.C. as the date of the War, which agrees with the date of the beginning of the Kali-yuga era as stated by Āryabhaṭa. But these are not two independent lines corroborating each other. There is no doubt that the author of the Aihole inscription simply stated the date of the record in terms of an era already current in his time. This raises the question of the authenticity of the Kali-yuga era mentioned by Āryabhaṭa. Unfortunately, we have no knowledge as to how he arrived at this date. As we have no reference to this Kali-yuga era in any record earlier than the time of Āryabhaṭa, it is generally supposed that the date given by him was not based upon any actual tradition, but was the result of backward calculation from his own time on the basis of some data or assumptions not known to us, and therefore, no great value can be attached to it. Further complication arises from the fact that the synchronism of the Bhārata War and the beginning of the Kali-yuga was not universally accepted. For, according to the calculation of Varāhamihira, followed by Kalhaṇa, the Bhārata War took place 653 years after the beginning of the Kali era.

The second line of evidence is furnished by a statement in the Purāṇas about the interval between the birth of Parīkṣit and the accession of Mahāpadma Nanda. Unfortunately, the crucial word in the expression containing the date reads variously as *pañcaśata*, *pañcāśat* and *pañcadaśa*, showing that a definite figure given in words was misread by the scribes of different texts of the Purāṇas. The result is that the period may be taken as 1500, 1050 and 1015 years. The difference between the second and third is not very material for our pur-

pose and the choice therefore lies between 1050 and 1500. Thus, assuming the Purāṇic tradition of the duration of Nanda rule to be 100 years, the resulting date of the Bhārata War would be about 1900 B.C. or 1450 B.C. in round number.

One strong argument has been advanced in favour of taking the duration of the interval to be 1500 years rather than 1050, and it is worth consideration, particularly in view of the fact that Pargiter has completely ignored this tradition in his calculation of the date of the Bhārata War. A Purāṇic verse quotes some astronomical details which suggest an interval of 2400 years between the birth of Parīkṣit and the extinction of the Andhras. Now, as the interval between this last event and Mahāpadma Nanda, as stated in the Purāṇas, may be easily calculated to be 836 years, the interval between him and Parīkṣit becomes a little more than 1500 years. It therefore supports the general statement, if we accept the reading 1500 years rather than 1050 years.

It is also interesting to note that the Bārhadrathas, the Pradyotas and the Śiśunāgas are named in succession in the Purāṇas as filling up the interval between the Bhārata War and the reign of Mahāpadma Nanda. This sequence may not be historically correct as the Pradyotas ruled in Avanti. But the Purāṇic system of chronology was evidently based on this sequence, and the total duration of these three dynasties, as given in the Purāṇas, is, respectively, 1000, 138 and 360 (or 163) years, i.e. a total of 1498 or 1301 years. The first agrees remarkably well with the statement that the interval between the Bhārata War and the accession of Mahāpadma Nanda was 1500 years. So it would be legitimate to conclude that, of the three variant readings 1500, 1050 and 1015, the first was probably the genuine figure. This line of evidence, therefore, furnishes the date 1900 or 1450 B.C. for the Bhārata War, the first of which seems to be preferable.

Another line of evidence is based on the Purāṇic lists of kings of different dynasties ruling between the Bhārata War and Mahāpadma Nanda. The most important of these dynasties were the Pauravas, the Aikṣvākas, and the Bārahadrathas cum Śaiśunāgas (omitting the Pradyotas who ruled contem-

poraneously in Avanti), and the number of kings, mentioned under these dynasties, is respectively 30, 31 and 32, showing a remarkable agreement. This does not, of course, establish the authenticity of the names of individual kings, and there are obvious mistakes; for example, the inclusion of the Śākyas in the Aikṣvāka list. But it is not unlikely that those who drew up the list had an authentic account of the total number of kings which is easier to remember and less likely to be corrupted than a long list of kings, and whenever there was a discrepancy between the two, they added or omitted names to keep the total number unaffected.

Another remarkable point in these lists of kings is that the names of Udayana, Prasenajit and Bimbisāra, who are definitely known to be contemporaries, occupy respectively the 5th, 5th and 6th places from the end, in the dynastic lists. It is difficult to regard this as merely fortuitous. The remarkable agreement in the total number of kings and the position of known contemporary kings certainly invests these three lists with an authentic character, at least to some degree, in a field where everything seems to be uncertain.

If, then, we proceed on the assumption that 30 kings ruled between the Bhārata War and the accession of Mahāpadma Nanda, we ought to be able to arrive at a reasonable conclusion about the date of the former event. As regards the date of Mahāpadma Nanda, he and his eight successors are said to have ruled for 100 years; Pargiter takes it to be 80 years, and we need not discuss this minor difference. As we know that Candragupta Maurya ascended the throne about 324 B.C., after exterminating the Nandas, the date of Mahāpadma's accession may be taken as 400 B.C. in round number.

But a far more difficult question is to determine the total duration of thirty reigns on the basis of an average period for each king. On this, the two eminent scholars who went deeply into the subject, namely Pargiter and S. N. Pradhan, differ widely, the average taken by them being respectively 18 and 28. Both of them claim their average to be based on the known reign-periods of dynasties in both eastern and western

countries, and the wide difference between the results shows the weakness of such calculations.

Perhaps it would be better to ascertain the average on the basis of kings reigning in India near about the time of Nanda. Leaving aside the Mauryas and the Śuṅgas, two short dynasties, we may take the Purāṇic date of 450 years for 30 kings of the Andhra or Śātavāhana dynasty which is generally accepted by the historians. This gives an average of 15 years. Coming to historical periods where the duration of a ruling dynasty is known with a fair degree of certainty, we may take the Gupta and Pāla kings, whose average is 25 years. Taking a mean between 25 and 15, we may take 20 years to be the average reign-period of a king in ancient India belonging to a stable dynasty of fairly long duration. Calculating on this basis, the reign-period of 30 kings would amount to 600 years and the date of the Bhārata War about 1000 B.C., i.e. 600 years before the accession of Mahāpadma about 400 B.C. This can only be regarded as a provisional date and has to be shifted according to the theory of the average duration of a reign. But, on the whole, this gives us a working hypothesis which is close to 950 B.C., the date assigned to the Bhārata War by F. E. Pargiter, and not very far from the date 1149 B.C., the date suggested by Pradhan.

The third line of evidence is furnished by astronomical calculation based on the position of the *nakṣatras* and planets at the time of specific events during the Bhārata War as stated in the *Mahābhārata*. P. C. Sen, one of the latest writers in this field who fixes the date of the War at about 2450 B.C., himself notes that the reference to a newmoon in connection with one event cannot be reconciled with reference to a full-moon in connection with another event, as the stated interval between the two was too short. He therefore remarks, "The moon was about 13 days old and not full. Vyāsa, by looking at such a moon, thought the night to be *paurṇamāsī* no doubt; but it was of the *Anumati* type and not of the type *Rākā* which was the next night." It is difficult to believe that Vyāsa or anybody else correctly noted and made a record of the position of the heavenly bodies at different stages during the

progress of the War and, even if we assume that he did so, that the record was correctly tramsmitted during 2500 years. Vyāsa himself, according to Sen's admission, made a mistake about such an obvious phenomenon as the fullmoon; what reliance can be put then on the statements about more complicated observations? As a matter of fact, the basic assumption of all such astronomical calculations is so incredible that no conclusion based on it should be taken seriously. Even in more recent historical times, the astronomical calculations have played us false many times. It was confidently asserted on the basis of such calculations that the Gupta era began in 165 A.D., the era used in Nepal began in 319 as well as in 595 A.D., and so on, though later they proved to be absolutely wrong. There are innumerable instances where the dates given in a well-known era in an epigraphical record do not fit in with the astronomical data contained therein. The best evidence of the weakness of this line of evidence is furnished by the wide divergence among scholars, nearly a dozen in number, all of whom have fixed a definite date for the Bhārata War to their own satisfaction, on the basis of astronomical calculations. My own view is that this line of evidence is least likely to help us in a search of the date of the Bhārata War.

I have so far discussed the problem of the date of the Bhārata War from different angles; possibly these and other points of view will be thoroughly discussed in this Seminar.

Among the other aspects of the Bhārata War, mentioned above at the beginning, the most important seems to be the relation between the leaders of the hostile parties. According to the *Mahābhārata*, they all belonged to the royal family of the Kurus, only Yudhiṣṭhira and his four brothers being styled Pāṇḍava after their father, Pāṇḍu, evidently to distinguish them from the ruling Kuru family of Dhṛtarāṣṭra with whom they were at war. Yet much has been made of the fact that, while the Kurus are well known in ancient literature, the Pāṇḍus first come into view with the later Buddhist literature which recognises the Pāṇḍavas as a mountain clan. It has even been suggested that "the original epic (*Mahābhārata*) was a poem

commemorating a war between the Pāñcālas and Kurus". But as has been aptly commented, it is impossible to think of the *Mahābhārata* without the Pāṇḍus. A still more revolutionary theory in recent times looks upon the Pāṇḍavas as a confederacy of five tribes from Central Asia who invaded India through Iran. It is difficult to take such views seriously; but they must not be allowed to mislead the unwary public by sheer novelty and sensationalism without any shred of justification even as a theory or hypothesis. For they are based merely on hypothetical derivation of the names of the Pāṇḍava heroes from Iranian or Scythian words.

II

Myth of the Great Bhārata War

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A careful examination of the evidence relating to the Bhārata War reveals two interesting facts. In the first place, even in ancient India, people were not sure as to when exactly the event might have occurred. Secondly, reference to it is conspicuous by its absence in the Vedic literature, i.e. in the earliest works of Indian literature, even though Kurukṣetra and the Kuru-Pañcālas are often mentioned therein. The importance of these points does not appear to be generally realised by the writers on the subject.

It seems that, when the popularity of the story of the Bhārata War developed considerably, an eagerness was exhibited by some people to assign a date to this so-called great event, and this led to the growth of a diversity of traditions which may be enumerated as follows :

1. According to Āryabhaṭa of Kusumapura (Pāṭaliputra), who was born in 476 A.D. and composed his celebrated astronomical treatise in 499 A.D., the Kali-yuga started in 3102 B.C.[1] The same view was supported by the author of the Aihole inscription (634 A.D.), who states that 3735 years had elapsed since the Bhārata War in the expired Śaka year 556.[2] Numerous later writers have followed this tradition, so that the beginning of the Kali-yuga era in 3102 B.C. came to be more or less generally accepted ultimately. But the division of time into four Yugas (viz. Kṛta, Tretā, Dvāpara and

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1 Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, pp. 22, 233; Keith, *Hist. Sans. Lit.*, p. 521.

2 *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VI, pp. 1 ff.

Kali) is not met with in very early Indian literature, and J. F. Fleet adduced reasons to believe that the reckoning was unknown in Vedic times and that it was invented by the astromers and chronologists 3500 years after the initial point assigned to it, i.e. about the commencement of the fifth century A.D.[3] In addition to Fleet's suggestion, which has been accepted by most writers on early Indian history and chronology, we have tried to prove that the use of an era in the dating of records was introduced and popularised in India by the foreign rulers not much earlier than the beginning of the Christian era.[4] We have shown that all the early documents of Indian rulers, who flourished before the advent of the Scythians in the first century B.C., as well as of many later rulers of indigenous origin are dated in the regnal reckoning of the reigning monarchs and not in any era.

2. A second school of astronomers and chronologists, represented by Vṛddha-Garga, Varāhamihira (sixth century A.D.) and Kalhaṇa (twelfth century A.D.) placed the Kuru and Pāṇḍava heroes of the Bhārata War 653 years after the beginning of the Kali-yuga, in 3102 B.C. and 2526 years before the commencement of the Śaka era in 78 A.D., i.e. in 2449 B.C.[5] It is of course impossible to reconcile this tradition with the one discussed above. But it is based on the Purāṇic belief, to be mentioned below, that the Great Bear was in the Maghā constellation when Parīkṣit was ruling and that it crosses the 27 *nakṣatras* in 27 centuries.

3. There are two Purāṇic traditions bearing on the problem under study, the first of them found in the *Vāyu, Matsya, Brahmāṇḍa, Bhāgavata* and *Viṣṇu Purāṇas* quoting the length of the intervening period from the birth of Parīkṣit to the coronation of Mahāpadma Nanda.[6] Since Parīkṣit was born, according to the *Mahābhārata*, shortly after the Bhārata War

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3 *JRAS*, 1911, pp. 479 ff., 675 ff.

4 Sircar, *op. cit.*, pp. 235 ff.

5 *Ibid.*, pp. 318-19.

6 Pargiter, *The Purāṇa Text of the Dynasties of the Kali Age*, p. 58.

and the Nanda dynasty founded by Mahāpadma ruled for a century, according to the Purāṇas, before it was extirpated by Candragupta Maurya shortly after Alexander's departure from India in 324 B.C., it is as good as the two traditions discussed above. Unfortunately the passage giving the duration of the period is often variously read in the different Purāṇas and in the different manuscripts of the same Purāṇa as 1050, 1115, etc.[7] That this divergence is due to the fact that the lengths of the reign periods of individual rulers flourishing between Parīkṣit and Mahāpadma were read and calculated differently by the Purāṇic chroniclers and copyists is very clear from the similar case of the duration of Andhra (Śātavāhana) rule variously given often in the different Purāṇas and different manuscripts of the same Purāṇas. It is well known that this period is quoted as 300, 411, 412, 418, 456 and 460 years[8] exactly as in the other case. The value that can be attached to such divergent traditions is not as to which of the different readings is correct, because it is apparently impossible to settle that question with the material at our disposal. The only point is that the Purāṇic chroniclers and copyists regarded the duration of the period interevening between Parīkṣit's birth and Mahāpadma Nanda's coronation to have been something between 1015 and 1500 years, so that this tradition would assign the Bhārata War immediately preceding the birth of Parīkṣit to a date roughly between 1400 and 1950 B.C. Needless to say that this cannot be reconciled with the other traditions ascribing the Bhārata War to 3102 or 2449 B.C. The value of this tradition depends on the importance we attach to the Purāṇic genealogies which are, by their very nature,

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7 Cf. *evaṁ varṣa-sahasraṁ tu jñeyaṁ pañcāśad-uttaram*, the word *jñeyaṁ* being read in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* as *śataṁ* (with *pañcadaś-ottaraṁ*), and *pañcāśad-uttaram* sometimes read as *pañca-śat-ottaraṁ* and *pañcadaś-ottaraṁ*.

8 *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 46. Cf. *varṣa-śatāni syuś=catvāri ṣaṣṭir=eva, śatāni catvāri pañca ṣaḍ=vai, dvādaś-ādhikaṁ . . . . . śata-catuṣṭayaṁ, śatāni catvāri pañcāśat ṣaṭ, śatāni catvāri pañca ṣaṭ sapta, catvāry=abda-śatāni ṣaṭ-pañcāśad-adhikāni, śate dve ca śataṁ ca, etc.*

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certainly of little help in determining the exact date of any event of the past, although they appear to place Parīkṣit centuries later than 3102 and 2449 B.C.

The unreliablity of such Purāṇic traditions is illustrated by another statement found in the same context, according to which the intervening period between Mahāpadma Nanda and Puloman, who was the last of the Andhra (Śātavāhana) kings according to the Purāṇas, was 836 years (826 years according to a few sources).[9] We know, however, that Mahāpadma ascended the throne shortly before 400 B.C. and the last king of the Śātavāhana dynasty ruled in the first half of the third century A.D., so that the interval between the two must have been less than 650 years.

4. Another Purāṇic tradition states that the Great Bear was in the Puṣyā constellation when Pratīpa (father of Śantanu and great-grandfather of Parīkṣit's great-grandfather) was ruling, that it took a century in crossing one *nakṣatra* and that it was in the Maghā when Parīkṣit was on the throne; it is further said, in the same context, that, after the end of the Andhra (Śātavāhana) rule, the Great Bear began its cycle again after the period of 2700 years (i.e. was in the Puṣyā) and also that it was in the 24th constellation from Maghā after the end of the Andhras (Śātavāhanas).[10] If Pratīpa flourished in the first (Puṣyā) of the 27 centuries and Parīkṣit in the third (Maghā) and if the downfall of the Andhras (Śātavāhanas) fell in or shortly before the 25th or 24th century after Parīkṣit, the interval between Parīkṣit and Puloman would be about 23 or 22 centuries. Since Puloman flourished in the first half of the third century A.D., Parīkṣit and the Bhārata War appear to be referred here to about the 20th or 19th century B.C., even though the intention was apparently to assign Parīkṣit to about 2449 B.C., i.e. in the 25th-24th century B.C. when the Great Bear was staying in the Maghā according to Varāhamihira and others. If Parīkṣit is said to have flourished about 2449 B.C. and the fall

9 *Ibid.*, p. 58.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 75.

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of the Andhras is placed before the 25th century thereafter, i.e. before c. 51 A.D., this tradition also goes against the known facts of history.[11]

5. There are certain palpably absurd traditions like those in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* (11th century A.D.) and the Eastern Cālukya inscriptions, according to which Udayana, king of Kauśāmbī and a contemporary of the Buddha who died about 486 B.C., was the fifth or sixth in lineal succession from Parīkṣit, so that the latter could not have flourished much earlier than 700 B.C.[12]

6. The Jain tradition makes the heroes of the Bhārata War contemporaries of the Tīrthaṅkara Ariṣṭanemi who, however, belongs to the domain of mythology. The chronological traditions of the Jains, which are late, conflicting and worthless for historical purposes for the early period, scarcely help us in determining the date of the Bhārata War. All that can be said on this basis is that the War was fought sometime before the days of Mahāvīra, i.e. about the beginning of the 6th century or earlier.

The divergent traditions discussed above would show that the people had originally little knowledge about the Bhārata War, but that they entertained various ideas about its date only after its story had attained considerable popularity with the evolution of the *Mahābhārata* as an epic. If therefore the story developed on the basis of a genuine historical event, the

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11 The recently published Hisse-Borala inscription (*Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXVII, p. 6) gives the date as Śaka 380 (458 A.D.) when the Great Bear was in the Uttara-Phalgunī *nakṣatra* and 3020 years of the Saptarṣi cycle had elapsed, in the style of Varāhamjhira, etc., who speak of the Great Bear staying in Maghā 2526 years before the beginning of the Śaka era, i.e. in 2449 B.C. If the Great Bear had been in Maghā in 2449 B.C. it was in Uttara-Phalgunī in 458 A.D.; but the Hisse-Borala tradition puts the commencement of the cycle at 2562 B.C. This has been misunderstood by those who have so far written on the Hisse-Borala inscription. See *Journ. Anc. Ind. Hist.*, Vol. I, 1967-68, pp. 94ff.

12 Raychaudhuri, *PHAI*, 1950, p. 32; Sircar, *The Guhilas of Kiṣkindhā*, p. 13.

latter must have been originally a petty family or tribal feud which formed the theme of a battle-song that was gradually embellished and magnified throughout the centuries by different poets and minstrels, ultimately developing into the great war-poem of the *Mahābhārata*, supposed to have been completed during the long period between the 4th century B.C. and the 4th century A.D.

Another question requiring an answer is whether the occurrence of the Bhārata War in the 4th, 3rd or 2nd millennium B.C. is reconcilable with the usually accepted views regarding the proto-historic Harappa or Indus Valley civilization and the advent of the Aryans in India about the middle of the 2nd millennium B.C. We have probably to answer the question in the negative.

A. B. Keith rightly wonders at the naïve credulity of those who believe in the historicity of the Bhārata War in spite of the absence of any mention of it in the Vedas, although H. C. Raychaudhuri did not share his opinion.[13] It appears to us, however, that there must have been reference to the Bhārata War in Indian literary works much earlier than the fourth century B.C. if it was really a remarkable historical event of the hoary past.

Raychaudhuri draws our attention to the mention, in the later Vedic literature, of such figures associated with the Bhārata War story as Pratīpa's son Bāhlika, Vicitravīrya's son Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Devakī's son Kṛṣṇa and Yajñasena's son Śikhaṇḍin as well as to the allusion to the unfriendly feelings between the Kuru prince Bāhlika and the Sṛñjayas and to the Kurus reproaching the Dālbhyas associated with the Pañcālas, the Bhārata War being sometimes represented in the Great Epic, it is said, as a trial of strength between the Kurus and the Sṛñjayas or Pañcālas. He further suggests that the battle-songs describing the struggle of the Kurus and the Sṛñjayas and their associates

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13 *Op. cit.*, p. 6. It is a significant fact that Kurukṣetra and the Kurus are very often mentioned in the Later Vedic literature, which is, however, totally silent about the Pāṇḍavas and the battle of Kurukṣetra.

must have been current in the fifth century B.C. because a Vaiśampāyana was known to Pāṇini while the *Mahābhārat-ācārya* Vaiśampāyana is mentioned in Aśvalāyana's *Gṛhyasūtra*. Unfortunately, these arguments are palpably too inadequate to prove that the Bhārata War was regarded by the people as an event of great magnitude much earlier than fourth century B.C. It is not possible to determine whether the original battle-song, which was the nucleus on which the Bhārata War story finally developed, was one of the *itihāsas* (legends) alluded to in the Vedic literature.

If the so-called Bhārata War was originally a small family feud or tribal struggle gradually magnified by poets and minstrels over the centuries, it is obviously not possible to determine its date. The attempts of Pargiter who assigns the event to c. 950 B.C., of Raychaudhuri ascribing it to the ninth century B.C. and of various other writers who have suggested this or that date appear to be all unconvincing.

It is often believed that Pargiter's theory is based on Purāṇic evidence. Actually, however, he not only rejects such Purāṇic statements as the one regarding the period intervening between Parīkṣit's birth and Mahāpadma's accession, but even the conflicting statements regarding the length of individual reigns as given in the Purāṇas and suggests an arbitrary period covering the reigns on the basis of an imaginary average of 18 years per reign.[14] We do not understand how only a part of the Purāṇic evidence can be accepted when it militates against specific statements in the Purāṇas themselves.

We cannot also overlook the shaky nature of the evidence of averages as is very clearly demonstrated by A. S. Altekar's attempt to prove in 1939 that the Bhārata War occurred in 1400 B.C., but in 1959 that the event took place in 950 B.C. as suggested by Pargiter. In both the cases he depends on the genealogy of the Eastern Cālukyas of Veṅgī, though in 1939 he spoke of 40 kings ruling for 656 years (16½ year in average),

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14 *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, pp. 181 ff.

but twenty years later only of 32 kings reigning for 461 years (14½ years per ruler).[15]

Raychaudhuri depends on the lists of Brahmanical teachers as found in the Vedic literature and rejects a number of Purāṇic statements which are opposed to the Vedic evidence. He says that Kavaṣa's son Tura, who was a priest of Parīkṣit's son Janamejaya, was separated by 5 or 6 generations of teachers from Aruṇa's son Uddālaka whose disciple was Kuṣītaka's son Kahola. It is further pointed out that Aśvalāyana, author of the *Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra*, or his pupil, honours a Kahola and that this Aśvalāyana may be identified with Assalāyana of the *Majjhimanikāya*, who was a contemporary of the Buddha who died in c. 486 B.C. Thus it is found that Janamejaya's contemporary Tura was 8 or 9 priestly generations above a contemporary of the Buddha, and, taking the duration of a priestly generation to cover about 30 years as suggested by Jacobi and Rhys Davids, Raychaudhuri assigns Parīkṣit to a date more than 240 or 270 years earlier, i.e. in the ninth century B.C.[16] It seems that he could have as well said eighth century B.C.

Unfortunately, Raychaudhuri's theory involves a number of identifications such as that of Kuṣītaka's son Kahola with Kahola of the *Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra* and Aśvalāyana, author of the *Gṛhyasūtra*, with Asslāyana, contemporary of the Buddha, and these may not be regarded as satisfactory by all investigators, especially because his chronology is opposed to certain specific statements of the Purāṇas. According to the Purāṇic lists, Udayana, contemporary of the Buddha, was the twentyfifth in descent from Parīkṣit.[17] If we do not totally discard this list, we have to face the unconvincing position that 10 generations of priests covered the same period as 25 generations of kings. Again, if the great Bhārata War was fought in the ninth or tenth century B.C., it is not only impossible to explain the absence of any reference to it in the Vedic literature, but also to under-

15 See *Proc. IHC*, 1939, p. 54; 1959, p. 26.

16 *Op. cit.*, pp. 33 ff., 50 ff.

17 Pargiter, *The Purāṇa Text*, pp. 65-66.

stand why the writers of the Gupa age (viz. Āryabhaṭa, Varāhamihira and the compilers of the historical sections of the Purāṇas) assigned to it such remote dates as falling in the fourth, third and second millennia B.C. Further, even if Parīkṣit is believed to have flourished in the ninth century B.C., it hardly proves, it seems to us, anything definite about the date, nature and magnitude of the so-called Bhārata War which in its present form is no better than a myth without any historical value at all. The final from of the story represents the War as fought primarily between the Kurus or Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, though it is often supposed that it was really a struggle between the Kurus and the Sṛñjayas or Pañcālas. If the latter was the case, then no reliance can apparently be placed on the tradition associating the War with the birth of Parīkṣit, which would appear to have been introduced into the story long after the event.

Then again, in connection with the magnitude of the Bhārata War as described in the *Mahābhārata*, we have to consider whether the connection of the rulers of the eastern and southern borders of India as active participants in the Kuru-Pāṇḍava War fought in the Eastern Punjab can be much earlier than the fourth century B.C. As for instance, King Bhagadatta of Prāgjyotiṣa or Assam is an important figure in the story of the War, although this kingdom and its rulers are conspicuous by their absence in the Vedic literature. With Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* exhibiting no knowledge of the people of the east and south in the 5th century B.C., it is impossible to believe that the idea of the king of Assam giving his daughter in marriage to the Kuru king and fighting in the War on the latter's side was conceived earlier than the rise of the historical empire of India, viz. that of the Nandas, in the fourth century B.C. Indeed, all stories of earlier *digvijaya* and empire-building described in the epics and the Purāṇas have to be regarded as belonging to the domain of mythology and folklore and not of history.[18]

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18 The idea of the empire of king Jarāsandha of Magadha looks like an echo of the Magadha empire which reached its zenith in the days of the Nandas and Mauryas.

Then again, a close fight on a single battle-field between 7 and 11 *akṣauhiṇīs* of soldiers was an impossibility not only in the ancient world, but even today, an *akṣauhiṇī* being composed of 21,870 chariots, as many elephants, 65,610 horsemen and 109,350 foot-soldiers and involving about 40 lacs of men. It must be regarded as a flight of fancy.

Lastly, we may refer to the argument that the Bhārata War should be regarded as a historical event because the Indians generally accept it as such. It is, however, no argument at all. A few centuries ago, the whole world believed that the sun moves around the earth; but this has been proved to be a wrong belief. Likewise, the Jain and Buddhist belief in the historical existence of the earlier Jinas and Buddhas has been regarded as an absurdity. As for instance, the first Jain Tīrthaṅkara Ādinātha or Ṛṣabhanātha is widely venerated by the Jains and we have works on his life and career. But he has been regarded as no more a historical personage than Indra or Śiva.

III

The Mahābhārata War—a Historical Perspective

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From the beginning of human history, the techniques of destroying men and material have been, as it were, a primary concern of man. And an organized assault by one social group upon another for wilful destruction of life and property with the selfish desire of furthering the interests of one group at the cost of others is a war which is the nucleus of any war including the *Mahābhārata* war. Being an epic, the *Mahābhārata* has undergone various stages of development reflecting the primitive and the advanced stage of society, spanning several centuries.

Man's most ancient arms of primitive warfare like hands, nails, teeth, stones, trees, clubs, spears, bows and arrows were freely used by the epic heroes not only to kill enemies, but also to seize flocks, women and food. In a free-style wrestling where hands, nails and teeth were freely used, Bhīma suffocated to death his adversary Kīcaka by pressing forcefully his hands against the latter's neck, forcing out his eyes and separating the limbs of his body.[1] In other duels, he separated Jaṭāsura's head from the body by the strength of his fists, broke Baka's hands and feet, tore open the sides of his body and divided Jarāsandha into two halves.[2] In Bhīma's fights with Jaṭāsura, Kirmira, Baka and the Anukīcakas, trees and rocks were hurled at each other.[3] Are not these inhuman combats enough re-

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1 Virāṭa-parvan, XXII. The bodies of Vālin and Sugrīva turned all blood as they used their hands, nails, teeth, stones and trees against each other (Vana-parvan, CLVII, CCLXXX).

2 Vana-parvan, CLVII; Ādi-parvan, CLXIV; Sabhā-parvan, XXIII.

3 Vana-parvan, XI, CLVII, Ādi-parvan, CLXIII; Virāṭa-parvan, XXIII.

flections of a savage society using the most primitive arms and methods of warfare?

The uprooted tree was the prototype of the rugged wooden club used by the primitives as their basic shock weapon. And although no stone-age war club in the shape of a round-headed piece of heavy wood has survived for archaeological discovery, it seems to be the direct antecedent of the *gadā* (mace) handled so efficiently by the heroes of the *Mahābhārata*. A number of spherical stone mace-heads with hole for the wooden handle, traced in the Indus Valley, suggest the antiquity of their use going back to c. 2500 B.C. Bhīma shattered to pieces both the thighs of Duryodhana by the mace,[4] and Sunda and Upasunda dropped dead, their heads battered by each other's *gadās*, in a fight for Tilottamā.[5] Men of the stone age wielded suitable pieces of wood and stone hatchets; and the maces with which the *Mahābhārata* heroes bludgeoned one another are the direct descendants of the ordinary clubs and primitive stone-maces.

The *cakra* was another interesting missile associated with Kṛṣṇa, a dark-skinned pre-Aryan hero.[6] It was used by him not only to destroy the beasts of the jungle or game, but also to kill human adversaries like Śiśupāla.[7] Like the primitive Australian boomerang, it returned to the skilful thrower after hitting the target.[8]

The bow and arrow handled by the epic heroes[9] were man's earliest mechanical invention. They were the most efficient projectile of the primitive man. The earliest arrows,

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4 Śalya-parvan.

5 Ādi-parvan, CCXII.

6 Cf. Kosambi, *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, p. 115.

7 Ādi-parvan, CCXXI; Sabhā-parvan, XLV.

8 Ādi-parvan, CCXXI, CCXXVIII. Like the Australians handling the boomerang, the Arizona Indians, the Southern Californians and the Sudanese, threw curved flat sticks, at rabits, fowl and small mammals. Cf. Lowie, *An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*, pp. 211-12: Goldenweiser, *Anthropology*, p. 70.

9 Ādi-parvan, CLXXXVIII.

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tipped with the chipped microliths and sped from the elastic bow of bone or wood, opened new possibilities to the hunter to bet his agile game. Innumerable stone and bronze arrow-heads are found in the neolithic and chalcolithic sites of India. The manufacture of the epic weapons from the bones of Dadhīci[10] and Kṛṣṇa's blowing the conch-shell to give a challenging call to Śālva to be ready to fight[11] are also significant of the primitive methods of warfare.

Bhīṣma's forcible removal of the three daughters of the Kāśi chief,[12] Arjuna's abduction of Subhadrā and his subsequent marriage with her,[13] Jayadratha's surreptitiously taking away Draupadī from the Pāṇḍava *āśrama*[14] and Jaṭāsura's attempt to abduct Kṛṣṇa[15] are also evidences of the savage custom of kidnapping women forcibly from neighbouring tribes.[16]

Together with such seizing of women by force, the *Mahābhārata* refers to their sharing as well. Draupadī was shared by the five Pāṇḍava brothers and had five sons from them ;[17] Kuntī was shared by Dharma, Vāyu and Indra and gave birth to Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma and Arjuna from them,[18] and Mādrī who gave birth to Nakula and Sahadeva was shared by the Aśvinīkumāras.[19] Justifying this custom, Yudhiṣṭhira not only states that it was a righteous practice followed by the ancestors of the Pāṇḍavas, but he even refers to Gautamī being the wife of seven *ṛṣis* and Vārkṣī being shared by the ten Prācetasa

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10 *Loc. cit.*

11 Vana-parvan, XIV.

12 Ādi-parvan, CII ; Ambopākhyāna-parvan, CLXXIII.

13 *Ibid.*, CCXX-CCXXI.

14 Vana-parvan, CCLXVIII.

15 *Ibid.*, CLVII.

16 Cf. Taylor, *Anthropology*, II, p. 59. Rāvaṇa's abduction of Sītā (Vana-parvan, CCLXVIII), and Duḥśāsana's forcible dragging of Draupadi by her hair, and his attempt to undress her (Sabhā-parvan, LXVII-LXVIII) are also examples reflecting a primitive society where women could not live with self-respect.

17 Ādi-parvan, CCXXI.

18 *Ibid.*, CXXIII.

19 *Ibid.*, CXXIV.

brothers in the past.[20] Vyāsa has described this practice as *sanātana dharma*.[21] The Todas of the Nilgiri hills, who are 'representatives of the aboriginal tribes that were in India even prior to the immigration of the Dravidians', follow the practice of sharing a mate among several brothers who jointly live with her—a custom based on ancient pre-Aryan polyandry.[22]

Not to mention Kṛṣṇa's traditional sixteen thousand mates, the Ādi-parvan alone, on the other hand, gives innumerable evidences of a complex social group with strange sex relationships. The birth of eleven sons to Bali's maid-servant from the blind Dīrghatamas and later on of five more sons to Bali's wife Sudeṣṇā from the same *ṛṣi*,[23] the hastening of his wife Madayantī by Kalmāṣapāda to Vasiṣṭha with the expectation of a son, named later as Aśmaka,[24] the births of Draupadī and Dhṛṣṭadyumna to king Drupada's wife by the *ṛṣis* Yāja and Upayāja,[25] the birth of Karṇa to Kuntī from Sūrya before her

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20 *Ibid.*, CXCV, CXCVII.

21 *Ibid.*, CXXII, CXCVII. The sexual unions of Bṛhaspati with Mamatā, the wife of his elder brother Utathya, and of Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana with Ambikā and Ambālikā, the wives of his brother Vicitravīrya, resulting into the birth of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu respectively (cf Ādi-parvan, CIV-CVI) are other evidences; and Yudhiṣṭhira even tells Arjuna, elsewhere, that there was nothing wrong if a younger brother approached the elder one while the latter was enjoying the company of the common mate, but the elder brother approaching the younger one in similar circumstances was considered unrighteous (Ādi-parvan, CCXIII). Arjuna too informs Yudhiṣṭhira that offering of the mate by the younger brothers to the eldest one was their duty (Ādi-parvan, CCXI).

22 Cf. Lowie, *An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*, p. 245; Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, I, p. 247. D. D. Kosambi has suggested that Kaṁsa's death at the hands of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma 'has good support in primitive usage' as 'in certain primitive societies, the sister's son is heir and successor to the chief; also, the chief has often to be sacrificed by the successor' (*The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, p. 116).

23 Ādi-parvan, CIV.

24 *Ibid.*, CLXXVII, CLXXXII.

25 *Ibid.*, CLXVII.

marriage with Pāṇḍu,[26] and of Vidura to Vicitravīrya's slave-girl from Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana[27] are only a few of several such examples of a primitive society ignorant of the institution of marriage. And the dialogue between Pāṇḍu and Kuntī confirms the existence of this *sanātana-dharma* where society had no sex restrictions and women roamed about freely seeking satisfaction of their sex desires.[28]

The unrestricted sex-life of the epic society reflects to some measure a result of group-life. Even the sharing of females as a stage of human reciprocity and co-operation moved behind the sharing of food and collaboration in hunting and fighting of the primitive society. Reciprocity between social groups and later on families turned the practice of mere mating into marriage, as the latter institution involved social stability when sexual division of labour was regularised.[29] Arjuna's contented reference to hunting with traps[29a] not only reflects a seasoned hunter's interest, but even the death of Dhṛtarāṣṭra in a forest conflagration, of the other Pāṇḍavas in a forest, of Parīkṣit by snake-bite, and of Kṛṣṇa being shot by a wild hunter are indications of a forest society of hunters.

With the introduction of cattle raising and agriculture, hunting became a secondary occupation. The hunted animals, useful for food and clothing only after their destruction, became an asset as a source of harness with the growing needs of man. The dog, useful in the pursuit of game, was the

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26 *Ibid.*, CXI-CXII.

27 *Ibid.*, CV-CVI.

28 *Ibid.*, CXXII. Later on, definite restrictions were imposed by Śvetaketu who could not bear the insult of his mother being invited by a Brāhmaṇa in the presence of his father, for bodily pleasure, though his father Uddālaka had tried to console his son by describing the practice as *sanātana-dharma* (Ādi-parvan, CXXII; cf. CIV).

29 Service, *Primitive Social Organisation*, p. 44. The Eskimos, lacking territorial exogamy and rules of marital residence, mated peacefully with others as they moved with the seasons to different hunting and fishing grounds (*ibid.*, p. 99).

29a See Hopkins, *The Great Epic of India*, p. 378.

earliest species domesticated by man and linked with him from the mesolithic period.[30]

And in this respect, its association with the Pāṇḍavas, particularly with Dharmarāja whom the animal accompanied to heaven,[31] is a very significant pointer. The Virāṭanagara raid by the Kauravas, in which thousands of cattle were seized,[32] reflects the pastoral life of the times. Kṛṣṇa's fostering in the *Gokula* (cattle-herders' commune) and association with cattle, milkmen and milkmaids, also indicate a cattle-herders' society.[33] Balarāma being associated with the plough and called *Saṅkarṣaṇa* (a ploughman) and the Pāṇḍavas clearing Indraprastha by the traditional method of burning down the forest and the new territory settled for plough-farming are also equally interesting indications.[34] And the plough has been archaeologically traced to India by 1300 B.C.[35]

However primitive may be the use of barks and skins as garments by the Pāṇḍavas[36] and the staking of persons and property in the gambling of Yudhiṣṭhira with Śakuni, and of Nala with Puṣkara,[37] references to cannibalism in the *Mahābhārata* reflect nothing less than the savagery of the epic society.

Even if one ignores Jarāsandha's human sacrifice,[38] the consumption of human flesh by Baka, Kalmāṣapāda, Agastya and the Rākṣasas[39] is very conspicuous as a savage practice. Could there be better evidence to prove the savagery of the epic society than the hacking to pieces of Gautama by the

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30 Childe, *Progress and Archaeology*, p. 16. The Veddas of Ceylon hunted deer with dogs.

31 Mahāprasthānika-parvan, I; cf. Morgan, *Prehistoric Man*, p. 166.

32 Virāṭa-parvan, XXX.

33 Cf. Kosambi, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

34 *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92.

35 Childe, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

36 Ādi-parvan, CXCIV; cf. Tīrthayātrā-parvan, XCVII.

37 Sabhā-parvan, LXV-LXVII; Nalopākhyāna-parvan, LIX-LXI, LXXVIII.

38 *Ibid.*, XXII.

39 Ādi-parvan, CLV, CLXXVII, CLXXXII; Tīrthayātrā-parvan, XIX; Ādi-parvan, CLXXVII.

Rākṣasas and distributing the flesh among the Dasyus, and the drinking of Duḥśāsana's blood by Bhīma after killing the former on the battle-field ?[40]

The ancient Hastināpura associated with the *Mahābhārata* war is identified with a site of the same name in U.P. And in the recent extensive and systematic excavations of the place, various cultural periods ranging from c. pre-1300 B.C. to 15th century A.D. have been traced. The earliest phase (Period I) represented an occupation with a crude ochre-coloured pottery. It was followed by a distinctive ceramic called the 'Painted Grey Ware' (Period II). And subsequently the site was inhabited by people who used iron and 'Northern Black Polished Ware' (Period III). Period I exhibited no use of iron, and no terracotta human or animal figurines, and is devoid of structural remains. Period II of 1100 to 800 B.C. indicated brick-bats with no regular house-plans, excepting a few mud or mud-brick walls and some crude terracotta animal figurines. No iron was traced even in this layer.[40a] A number of bones of sheep, cattle and buffaloes indicated their domestication during this period. Horns of antelope and bone-needles were other interesting objects known to those people. Period III, dated from the 6th to 3rd century B.C., gave iron objects like barbed and socketed arrow-heads and a chisel. It also had copper and silver punch-marked coins not traced earlier. Though innumerable articles like those of Period II were found, some regular brick structures were an interesting feature of this period.[41]

Though one could agree with Lal that the 'Painted Grey Ware' was later than the Harappa ware and that it well pre-

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40 Śānti-parvan, CLXXII; Karṇa-parvan. The wishful thinking of Kirmira to digest the flesh of Bhīma before killing the latter (Vana-parvan, XI) is another evidence of the practice of cannibalism by the epic society.

40a [The excavator speaks of 'iron slags at the uppermost levels' of Period II (*Anc. Ind.*, Nos. 10-11, p. 12A). The date of the Period may really be later.—Ed.]

41 Cf. Lal, 'Excavations at Hastināpura' in *Ancient India*, Nos. 10-11.

ceded the 'Northern Black Polished Ware', one is not convinced with his contention that 'the date of the *Mahābhārata* battle falls within Period II at Hastināpura', and that the sites associated with the *Mahābhārata* story expose, in those excavations, finds of the period of the story itself. Apart from the association of the epic heroes with the Painted Grey Ware, their association with the early Aryan stock of India looks equally presumptuous. Rightly states A. Ghosh, in his *Notes* on the report of Lal, that 'the excavation has no bearing on the authenticity or otherwise of the epic tale' and "It is admittedly premature to hold that the latter people were no other but the Aryans."[42]

If the date of the earliest historical kernel of the feud between the two savage tribes of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas is placed at 3102 B.C., the latest stage of the composition of the epic can be taken to 200 A.D.[43] Based, however, on purely literary traditions these dates would remain open to doubt.

The earliest phase of the epic society reflects a people busy with savage fights with hands, nails, teeth, clubs, maces, the bow and arrow, consuming human flesh and blood, still in the hunting and cattle-herding stage, and ignorant of family life. These savages have a nearly perpetual state of war or near-war with neighbouring savage tribes. The savage feud of the *Mahābhārata* is more like an ambush and hit-and-run raid or occasionally hand-to-hand inhuman fights rather than an all-out campaign. In fact head-hunting, cannibalism, rape, torture of captives, massacre and other forms of terrorization and atrocious nerve-warfare were more effective means at that level than true combats. Such a society may be associated either with the last phase of the palaeolithic or the first phase of the pre-pottery

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42 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

43 Cf. Sengupta, 'The Historicity of the *Mahābhārata* on the Basis of Astronomical Data' in *JRASB*, Letters, Vol. XXII, pp. 76-79; Macdonell, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 239; Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, p. 182; Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 149, note 11; Kosambi, *op. cit.*, p. 91; *JRASB*, Letters, Vol. XVI, p. 3; *Journal of the Ganganatha Jha Research Institute*, Vol. VIII, pp. 203-11; *JRASB*, Letters, Vol. XVIII, pp. 64-65, note 3; etc.

microlithic age. It may be even earlier than the ochre-washed pottery layer of Hastināpura I. Like Kṛṣṇa, 'the dark', the primitive heroes of the *Mahābhārata* war could be not only pre-Aryan but pre-Dravidian as well.

The present paper makes no claim to perfect precision, but makes only an attempt to project some of the issues in the light of which the previous conceptions of the *Mahābhārata* war need to be reconsidered anthropologically and archaeologically. With inadequate study of anthropology and less inadequate excavations in India, it is premature to indicate the exact date of the *Mahābhārata* war. This paper, however, seeks to suggest that a fruitful line of investigation lies in a combined research in anthropology, archaeology and history, and not each to itself. The question remains how well this approach works.

IV

The Kurukṣetra War and the Pāṇḍavas

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That the Kurukṣetra war was originally fought between the Kurus and the Pāñcālas and that the so-called Pāṇḍavas had nothing to do with the real Bhārata war are very old theories held by Lassen, Weber, Monier-Williams and others. They offered the following arguments in favour of the said hypothesis: (1) References to the dispute between the Kurus and the Pāñcālas are frequently found in the *Mahābhārata*. (2) In the battle between the Kurus and the so-called Pāṇḍavas, the army of the latter was led by Dhṛṣṭadyumna, the Pāñcāla prince. (3) It was Śikhaṇḍin, a son of the Pāñcāla king Drupada, who was responsible for the death of Bhīṣma, the Kuru general. (4) Droṇa, who held the post of the commander-in-chief of the Kurus after the fall of Bhīṣma, was again slain by Dhṛṣṭadyumna. (5) If the war took place between the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and those of Pāṇḍu, the proper designation of the war would be Dhārtarāṣṭra-Pāṇḍava and not Kuru-Pāṇḍava because the Pāṇḍavas were also Kurus.[1] (6) In the earlier texts, the Pāṇḍavas do not occur; in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, we come across such names as Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Parīkṣit and Janamejaya, but not those of the Pāṇḍu brothers. (7) The evidence of the *Mahābhārata* itself suggests that the so-called Pāṇḍavas were in no way connected with the Kuru dynasty.

A scientific approach towards the historical character of the Kurukṣetra war depends upon a discriminating analysis of the facts presented by the great epic itself. "The entire work may be compared to a confused congery of geological strain."[1a]

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1 [Cf. the Māṭhara-Kauṇḍinya *nyāya* (*Mahābhāsya*, N. S. Press, Vol. I, p. 113.—Ed.]

1a Monier-Williams, *Indian Epic Poetry*, p. 10.

The Pāṇḍavas are portrayed as the models of all the virtues and the types and ideals of perfect knighthood, and are so regarded by the Hindus to this day. But this portrayal is wholly inconsistent with the ethnological data of the Pāṇḍavas as found in the *Mahābhārata*. Hopkins writes, "A later age offered various explanatory excuses for the polyandry of the Pāṇḍus who, however, as a northern hill tribe or family, probably were really polyandrous, and needed no excuse."[2] The whole of the northern hill area was once polyandrous. "A Tibetan girl on marrying does not enter into a nuptial tie with an individual, but with all his family, in the following somewhat complicated manner: If an eldest son marries an eldest sister, all the sisters of the bride become his wife. Should he, however, begin by marrying the second sister, then only the sisters from the second down will be his property. If the third, all from the third, and so on. At the same time when the bridegroom has brothers they are all regarded as their brother's wife's husbands, and they, one and all, cohabit with her as well as with her sister, if she has any."[3] Polyandry was till lately widespread in Kulu and the Kangra District,[4] while in Lahul it is 'a recognised institution and very general'.[5] It it likewise general in Saraj, the Simla hills and the Kanaur District of the Upper Sutlej. In Ladakh, polyandry is a universal social feature,[6] and it was once general in the Hindukush and Chitral.[7] The fact is substantiated by the testimony of the eleventh century Arab scholar Al-Bīrūnī.[8] Even in the *Mahābhārata* (I. 113. 3-7), the people of Uttara-Kuru are spoken of as practising sexual promiscuity.

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2 *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, p. 258.

3 Savage London, *In the Forbidden Land*, Vol. II, p. 60.

4 Diack, *Gazetteer of the Kangra District*, Vol. II, p. 25; Vol. III, p. 13.

5 Rose, *Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and N.W.F.P.*, Vol. II, p. 448.

6 Drew, *The Northern Barriers of India*, p. 263.

7 Biddulph, *Tribes of the Hindoo-Koosh*, p. 82.

8 Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, Vol. I, p. 108.

Draupadī's polyandrous marriage has been doubted by some scholars because a very early text, the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, enunciates the rule that one wife cannot have many husbands at the same time.[9] But Draupadī's marriage is not an isolated event in the *Mahābhārata* which also refers to a woman named Jaṭilā belonging to the Gautama lineage, who was the wife of seven persons. Another woman called Vārkṣī married ten brothers of the Prachetas family.[10] This is a clear evidence of fraternal polyandry. It is also interesting to note that the Paraśurāma episode symbolizes the fight of the Aryan immigrants against the polyandry of the Nayar, etc., of the Far South. The polyandric desires of Reṇukā point to matriarchal characteristics of India. The murder of the mother by Paraśurāma seems to recall the destruction of ancient Indian Mother-right, subdued by a new principle. Paraśurāma is also regarded as the originator of the marriage between the Nambudri Brāhmaṇas and the Deva, Gandharva and Rākṣasa women, from which union the Nayars are said to have sprung. The Nambudri Brāhmaṇas who hold Paraśurāma to be their national hero probably immigrated to Kerala in the first half of the fourth century B.C.[11]

We are led by the following hypothesis that the Kurukṣetra war was originally fought between the Kurus and the Pāñcālas and it survived in the memory of the people throughout the ages. At a later age, the so-called Pāṇḍavas, a matriarchal polyandrous tribe, happened to rule over Hastināpura, and it is possible that one of their court poets sang the glory of these five polyandrous brothers by bringing them in relation to the old reputed Kuru family. That the Pāṇḍavas had matriarchal affiliations can be proved if the following facts are taken into account : (1) Mādrī's marriage with Pāṇḍu is of the Āsura type which is a matriarchal institution, because, in a patriarchal

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9 Mehta in *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay*, Vol. X, p. 382.

10 Ādi-parvan, CCXVIII.

11 Cf. Ehrenfels, *Mother-right in India*, pp. 137 ff.

society, the dowry is taken by the kinsmen of the bridegroom.[12] (2) The Karṇa-Śalya discourse proves that the Madrakas, along with the Āraṭṭas and Bāhīkas, were matriarchal peoples among whom property was transmitted from mother's brother to sister's son.[13] (3) Bhīma's matrilocal marriage with Hiḍimbā in which the former had to leave his own kinsmen and reside with his wife in her place clearly exhibits the matriarchal usage still current among the Khasis of Assam. (4) Arjuna's matrimonial relations with Citrāṅgadā and his assurance to her father that the offspring of their union would belong to the royal dynasty of Maṇipura are relics of matrilineal inheritance which is an important feature of the matriarchal society. (5) The Pāṇḍavas liked to introduce themselves as 'sons of Kuntī' and the said expression is very frequent in the *Mahābhārata*; but very few cases are offered by the same text in which Duryodhana introduced himself as 'son of Gāndhārī' or was invoked by such terms.[14] (6) In the Arjuna-Urvaśī episode, we find Arjuna tracing the origin of his dynasty from the divine damsel Urvaśī.[15] But how Urvaśī was associated with the forefathers of Arjuna is not explained in the *Mahābhārata*. Claiming origin from a divine ancestress is a well-known characteristic of the matriarchal tribes and castes of India.

From the facts indicated above it becomes clear that there is reason to doubt the account of the Pāṇḍavas as we find them in the present form of the *Mahābhārata*. We do not doubt the historicity of the Pāṇḍavas; but it appears that they did not belong to the royal dynasty of the Kurus, nor did they in any way contribute to the cause of the Kurukṣetra war which originally

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12 Cf. Ādi-parvan, CXIII.

13 Karṇa-parvan, LXIV, LXV.

14 In the *Mahābhārata*, the term *Gāndhārīputra* occurs only once while *Gāndhāri* denoting 'the son of Gāndhārī' occurs for no more than 31 times. But the terms *Kaunteya*, *Kuntīputra*, *Kuntīsuta*, etc., occur 926 times. Sörensen's Index, s.v. *Gāndhārī*, *Gāndhārīputra*, *Kuntīputra*, *Kuntīsuta*, *Kaunteya*. [*Pāṇḍava*, *Pāṇḍuputra*, etc., occur many hundreds of times.—Ed.]

15 Vana-parvan, XLVI.

took place between the Kurus and the Pāñcālas. Hopkins regards them as a Himalayan tribe, and this is supported by the testimony of a verse found in the Ādi-parvan.[16] But there is no need of clinging to a theory of the Himalayan origin of the Pāṇḍavas, since modern researches led by Russell, Thurston, Ananthakrishna Iyer and others prove that polyandry and the institutions associated with it survive not only in the Himalayan Districts and the Punjab, but also in U.P., Madhya Pradesh and practically the whole of the Deccan, especially in its southernmost areas.[17] Whether or not the Pāṇḍavas came from the Himalayas or from the Pāṇḍya country of the Far South is not very relevant to the question of their participation in the Kurukṣetra war. But reflection and enquiry would lead us to the hypothesis that they did not participate in it. After all, what we call truth is only the hypothesis which is found to work best.

16 *Evaṃ Pāṇḍoḥ sutāḥ pañca devadattā mahābalāḥ |*
vivardhamānās=te tatra puṇye Haimavate girau || (115. 25-27)

17 See Ehrenfels, *Mother-right in India*, pp. 18ff.

V

Role of Kṛṣṇa in the Mahābhārata War

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The Mahābhārata War, in Indian traditions, is regarded as one of those decisive events which left its great impress on posterity. The family quarrel between the two groups of first cousins for the ancestral kingdom engulfed in the deadliest combat practically all the kings and peoples of Northern India. And the result was an outright tragedy for both the victors and vanquished, and for the surviving Pāṇḍavas against hundreds of their relations and lacs of their soldiers. India politically became too weak and did not emerge as a political force until the coming of the Mauryas, her armour and soldiery being so badly destroyed and her political system disastrously weakened.

It may therefore be interesting, to examine the role of Kṛṣṇa in this catastrophic cataclysm, as he, by all means, played a great part in the sequence of events. Kṛṣṇa was the head of the Yādavas and controlled the large and powerful Yādava army which was held in respect and fear by all concerned. Karṇa advised Duryodhana to take effective steps against the Pāṇḍavas before Kṛṣṇa with his Yādava army comes to Drupada to help to restore to Yudhiṣṭhira his lost kingdom (Ādi-parvan, CCIX). When the war between the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas became imminent, both Duryodhana and Arjuna ran to Dvārakā to secure the help of Kṛṣṇa and the Yādava army.

What did Kṛṣṇa do? Did he try to be neutral? Did he become a mediator? Did he want the War to break out? What ideas and factors guided his policy and action in this obviously grave crisis? Before anwers to these questions are attempted, let us examine the background of the War with Kṛṣṇa in the focus.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra being blind at birth, though elder, was passed over and his younger brother Pāṇḍu became the king

of the Kuru kingdom. After the death of Pāṇḍu, Yudhiṣṭhira, his eldest son, was held to have the rightful claim on the throne. But Duryodhana, the eldest son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, believed that, the death of Pāṇḍu made his (Duryodhana's) claim to the throne unassailable. The issue was joined thus. Did Dhṛtarāṣṭra's natural deficiency affect the right of his son Duryodhana to the throne which had passed on to his younger brother, Pāṇḍu? Duryodhana failed to appreciate why he, being the eldest son of the eldest member of the Kuru dynasty, for no fault of his, should be put aside by the Pāṇḍavas on the ground that Pāṇḍu, their father, never the natural and rightful owner of the throne, had intervened because of the physical disability of his elder brother, Dhṛtarāṣṭra. The Pāṇḍavas, on the other hand, appear to have held that Dhṛtarāṣṭra's ineligibility to succession *ipso facto* ruled out any claim for succession by his sons. Whatever be the legal technicality, there appears to be a case for both the sides. In such circumstances, partition of the empire appeared to be one solution, which Duryodhana refused.

However, on Pāṇḍu's death, Dhṛtarāṣṭra did assume royalty; but, in actual practice, Duryodhana controlled the reins of government. Duryodhana was extremely rash and ambitious and, finding himself and his brothers outplayed in all athletic, archery and chariotry contests by his Pāṇḍava cousins, he decided to put an end to their lives. However, the Pāṇḍavas escaped from the lac house and, afraid of the Kauravas, hid themselves in the forests. Hearing of Draupadī's *svayaṁvara* when in the Matsya kingdom, the Pāṇḍavas went to Pañcāla in the disguise of Brāhmaṇas. However, Arjuna pierced by his arrow the hanging fish seeing its shadow in the oil jar and was entitled to the hand of Draupadī. Duryodhana and many other kings were there; but none had succeeded in the test. Now, all these combined together to overcome the five Brāhmaṇa young men; but Arjuna and Bhīma held their own. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were also there, and Kṛṣṇa realised that the Brāhmaṇas were the Pāṇḍavas. It is here that Kṛṣṇa emerges as a partisan since he categorically spelled out his mind to Balarāma, disclosing the identity of Bhīma and Arjuna, and

said that if Arjuna wanted their (Yādava's) help, they should help him, because the son of Pāṇḍu could not be defeated.

Henceforth Kṛṣṇa takes great interest in the Pāṇḍavas. He visits Kuntī and the Pāṇḍavas in their hideout, and accused Duryodhana as a *pāpin*. On the occasion of the marriage of the sons of Pāṇḍu with Draupadī, Kṛṣṇa sent valuable presents to them. The friends of Duryodhana already knew that Kṛṣṇa, with his men, would help the Pāṇḍavas against the Kauravas, and that is why Karṇa advised Duryodhana to meet him immediately before the help was offered.

However, in the Kaurava court, wiser counsel prevailed, at least for the time being, and this was because of the realisation that Kṛṣṇa would be on the side of Arjuna. Vidura advised Dhṛtarāṣṭra to invite Yudhiṣṭhira and offer him half the kingdom, otherwise there would be war in which the Pāṇḍavas would win, because Kṛṣṇa would be on their side (Ādi-parvan, CCIV). Vidura went to Drupada's court to invite the Pāṇḍavas on behalf of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and Kṛṣṇa, who was there, advised the Pāṇḍavas to go to Hastināpura and rule over half the kingdom offered to them (Ādi-parvan, CCIX). Thus Kṛṣṇa was for an honourable compromise, and not for war at any cost. Probably Duryodhana's misdeeds had not been by then enough to make Kṛṣṇa eager to punish him.

Or probably Kṛṣṇa had his own scheme to be accomplished through Yudhiṣṭhira as king. He had a deadly enemy in Jarāsandha, the king of Magadha, who had raided Mathurā many times and forced Kṛṣṇa to migrate to Dvārakā. When Yudhiṣṭhira embarked on a *digvijaya*, Kṛṣṇa personally led Bhīma and Arjuna to Magadha and got Jarāsandha killed by Bhīma in a wrestling duel. Kṛṣṇa thus avenged his humiliation, and the bonds of intimacy and mutual confidence among the Pāṇḍavas and Kṛṣṇa further grew. Yudhiṣṭhira was always feeling indebted to Kṛṣṇa for his advice and help and told him that he was their father and mother. The Rājasūya sacrifice became the occasion for Kṛṣṇa to be regarded as worthy of being revered by Yudhiṣṭhira and, as a result, let Śiśupāla, another enemy of Kṛṣṇa, invite the fatal discus thrown by the latter. Kṛṣṇa was rid of his two powerful enemies, and

Yudhiṣṭhira began to enjoy his kingdom and beautify his new capital Indraprastha.

It is needless to relate how Duryodhana felt personally insulted during his first visit to the palace of Yudhiṣṭhira at Indraprastha, and this appears to have upset him and made him decide to pull down the Pāṇḍavas from power. This led to the play of dice and the loss of their kingdom and personal liberty and the honour of their wife. They accepted exile for 12 years and one year's exile in disguise.

When the news of banishment of the Pāṇḍavas reached the Bhojas, Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas, they, with Vāsudeva, came to Yudhiṣṭhira and, in a great rage, Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa said, "The earth shall drink the blood of Duryodhana and Karṇa, of Duḥśāsana and the wicked Śakuni. Slaying these in battle and defeating their royal allies, I shall install Yudhiṣṭhira on the throne. The wicked deserve to be slain. Verily this is eternal morality" (Vana-parvan, III). Of course Arjuna pacified the angry Kṛṣṇa who declared to Arjuna, "Thou art mine and I am thine, while all that is mine is thine also," and assured Draupadī, "I will exert to the utmost of my power for the sons of Pāṇḍu. I promise that thou shalt be the queen of kings."

There can be no objection for Kṛṣṇa openly taking the side of the Pāṇḍavas and assuring them all help against Duryodhana and Śakuni. But should he not have pondered over Yudhiṣṭhira's weakness? Being wise, Yudhiṣṭhira should have known the uncertain result of gambling. Then, why did he choose Śakuni to play with? He could have chosen any other competitor. Probably he felt that Śakuni was his match and no one else deserved the honour. False sense of pride! There can hardly be any excuse for the universally respected, wise and righteous Yudhiṣṭhira to go on after one defeat to another, pawning everything near and dear to him, even his and his brothers' personal freedom and the honour of their queen. It was sheer good luck that the otherwise ruthless Duryodhana felt satisfied by exiling them. What is strange is that not even once did Kṛṣṇa reproach Yudhiṣṭhira for his weakness and follies. Balarāma actually puts two and two together and accuses Yudhiṣṭhira of foolishness. Of course Duryodhana

exceeds the limits of decency; but is not everything fair in love and war, and, as we know, did not Kṛṣṇa himself break or attempted to break the rules of war in favour of the Pāṇḍavas?

Kṣṛṇa agreed with the Yādava hero Sātyaki that the Yādavas and the army of Drupada could crush the Kauravas and win back the kingdom for Yudhiṣṭhira. But the latter's sense of guilt and regard for promise made him to dissuade the Yādavas from this course of action. Yudhiṣṭhira respectfully refused the offer of Kṛṣṇa to destroy the power of Duryodhana by saying, "as promised by us, we will spend all the twelve years in lonely forests" (Vana-parvan, CLXXXII).

However, as soon as the 13th year of exile of the Pāṇḍavas was over, Kṛṣṇa anxiously planned to restore the lost kingdom to the Pāṇḍavas. He suggested for sending an able, virtuous and honest ambassador to the Kauravas for inducing them to give half the kingdom to Yudhiṣṭhira (Udyoga-parvan, I). But this was probably his half-hearted attempt; and, when Virāṭa spoke to him about the unlikelihood of Duryodhana giving up the kingdom by peaceful means and opined that preparations must be made by the Pāṇḍavas to collect an army, Kṛṣṇa readily agreed by saying, "if Duryodhana by folly refuses to make peace, then, having summoned others, summon us too" (Udyoga-parvan, V).

The two sides made feverish efforts to enlist support of kings of the country. Both Arjuna and Duryodhana went to Dvārakā to secure the help of Kṛṣṇa and the Yādava army. Duryodhana reached Kṛṣṇa first; but the latter saw Arjuna first. When offered the choice of a non-fighting charioteer, Kṛṣṇa, and the large Nārāyaṇī army, Arjuna selected Kṛṣṇa on his condition that he would not take up weapon in the war, and Duryodhana appeared to be satisfied with the Nārāyaṇī army on his side. Events later showed that Duryodhana had no reason to be happy over this arrangement. What has been said above would suggest that Kṛṣṇa would not have but allowed first choice to Arjuna. However, Duryodhana, who must have been fully aware of Kṛṣṇa's championing the side of the Pāṇḍavas, might have felt that the disciplined Nārāyaṇī army would serve him better than a doubtful friend, Kṛṣṇa.

The war appeared to be imminent. All well-meaning persons were aware of the grim tragedy to come, and no sacrifice should have been considered great enough to save the impending destruction of the Kuru race. Sañjaya came from the Kaurava court and, realising the obduracy of the obstinate Duryodhana, said to Yudhiṣṭhira, "If, without war, the Kurus will not yield thy share, I think, it is better for thee to live upon alms than obtain sovereignty by war" (Udyoga-parvan, XXVII). But Kṛṣṇa, who was with the Pāṇḍavas on all crucial occasions, did not like this approach of Sañjaya and said, "When Dhṛtarāṣṭra and his sons, however, are so covetous, I do not see why hostility should not run high" (*ibid.*, XXV).

After the failure of the Sañjaya mission initiated by the Kauravas, another mission was mooted from the Pāṇḍava side. Yudhiṣṭhira requested Kṛṣṇa to go to the Kauvara court and plead there for the return of his share of the kingdom. However, Yudhiṣṭhira was fairly certain that Duryodhana would not listen to this and was confident that Kṛṣṇa would protect the Pāṇḍavas. Yudhiṣṭhira was actually torn between the horns of a dilemma—his desire for his rightful share of the kingdom and the apprehension for the destruction of the race. He said, "We cannot lawfully abandon that [fortune which had been ours]. Even death would be preferable in our struggles to regain that prosperity . . . . There can be no peace without the annihilation of one party; we do not wish to give up the kingdom, nor do we wish to see the extinction of our race. Under these circumstances, therefore, the peace that is attained through even humilation is the best." And mark, even Bhīma, usually against compromising, requests Kṛṣṇa to 'speak [in the Kaurava court] in such a strain that there may be peace with the Kurus'. He stressed the fact that, by Duryodhana's activity, the Bhāratas will all be consumed even like forests by fire at the end of the dewy season. Realising this graver tragedy than the loss of their share of the kingdom, Bhīma observed, "All of us would rather in humiliation follow Duryodhana submissively, but let not the Bhāratas be annihilated" (*ibid.*, LXXIII). Arjuna was also averse to war. It appears that the Pāṇḍavas, forced to choose between their own humi-

liation and the extinction of the race, were ready to choose the first. Peace at any price for the survival of the great Bhārata race, may be for the entire Āryāvarta, was being favoured in the Pāṇḍava camp. But Kṛṣṇa ridiculed the suggestion and actually abused Bhīma for his words spoken in panic. He observed, "Such language is not worthy of thee, for a Kṣatriya never enjoyeth that which he doth not acquire through power" (*ibid.*, LXXIV). Bhīma of course soon relented. Kṛṣṇa's mission under these circumstances was bound to fail and he very well knew it. He said to Yudhiṣṭhira, "The covetous sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra have become very powerful. Therefore there is no hope of their making peace with thee." "I think war with the enemy to be certain . . . Collect everything that thou needest for the impending war" (*ibid.*, LXXII). Then why this formality of the peace mission of Kṛṣṇa? He himself explains the purpose which was a diplomatic move to do open propaganda against Duryodhana, to dwell at length on his vices and the Pāṇḍavas' virtues and above all to make it known to all the kings of the earth that the Pāṇḍavas wanted peace, and the Kauravas had forced the war on them. He observed, "By going there, we will escape the blame of all the kings of the earth . . . my going there will not be fruitless, for, if our object be not fulfilled, we shall at least escape all blame." This was the real objective; he wanted to create the public opinion in favour of the Pāṇḍavas against the Kauravas and, if possible, to weaken the loyalty of the Kuru generals like Bhīṣma and Droṇa who were torn between the idea of righteousness and loyalty to the bread-giver. Kṛṣṇa's mission failed as expected; but his object to show the Kauravas in the wrong was largely successful. The mission was not of a peace-maker interested in restoring peace, but of a friend of the Pāṇḍavas, convinced of the righteousness of their cause and confident of their victory over the Kauravas. Kṛṣṇa was never dismayed, as Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma and Dhṛtarāṣṭra were for the apprehension of the extinction of their race. As he said, "Going there I will remove the doubts of all men who are still undecided as to the wickedness of Duryodhana" (*ibid.*, LXXII). He said later, "Suyodhana will never make peace

by giving up the kingdom without undergoing at our hands a wholesale destruction with his kinsmen." Kṛṣṇa in Hastināpura appealed to Dhṛtarāṣṭra to save the slaughter of the population of the earth by giving the Pāṇḍavas' rightful share of the kingdom. Dhṛtarāṣṭra expressed his helplessness and asked Kṛṣṇa to persuade Duryodhana to accept the peace terms. Kṛṣṇa recalled all the misdeeds of Duryodhana and declared that none amongst his friends could face Bhīma and that Arjuna was invincible. These words of insult and warning could hardly have any effect on the obstinate Duryodhana who, after rejecting the peace terms, planned to imprison Kṛṣṇa probably thinking that, without him, the Pāṇḍavas will be very weak. But this scheme, against the code of conduct of the kings, failed and Kṛṣṇa, by his *yogic* power, succeeded in terrifying the Kuru court.

Kṛṣṇa was very angry and, in his message to Duryodhana, warned him not to be under the illusion that, as he (Kṛṣṇa) would not himself fight and act as a *sārathi* only, he (Duryodhana) would have his way. He categorically stated, "Thinking thus, thou art not afarmed . . . . . if my wrath is excited, I may then consume all the kings [assembled by thee] as fire consumes a heap of straw." Yudhiṣṭhira appears to be more interested in seeing that Kṛṣṇa lives up to his promise than Kṛṣṇa himself.

When the warring forces faced each other in Kurukṣetra, Arjuna felt doubtful about the necessity of waging this cruel war for a share of the kingdom. But Kṛṣṇa overwhelmed him with his arguments and *yogic* power and successfully persuaded Arjuna to fight.

In course of the fighting, both sides broke the rules of war. Abhimanyu was attacked by seven *mahārathins* and was killed when unarmed. Kṛṣṇa by his *yogic* power, concealed the sun for a short time, encouraging Jayadratha to come out into the open to see Arjuna committing suicide as promised, and to be killed by Arjuna. When Droṇa was proving invincible, on the advice of Kṛṣṇa, an elephant named Aśvatthāman was killed and Yudhiṣṭhira, known for his truthfulness, was persuaded by Kṛṣṇa to cry loudly, 'Aśvatthāman is killed',

and the word 'elephant' was drowned in the loud noise of the trumpets. Droṇa hearing only Yudhiṣṭhira's words, "Aśvatthāman is killed," was dazed with sorrow, and Dhṛṣṭadyumna killed him just then. The wheels of Karṇa's car were stuck in mud and, when he came down to extricate the wheels, on Kṛṣṇa's advice, Arjuna shot his deadly arrow at him. When Duryodhana was hiding in a tank, Kṛṣṇa with Bhīma went there, abused him and forced him to come out to fight. In the fight, on a hint from Kṛṣṇa, Bhīma struck him on the thigh against the rules of fighting. The war was decided in favour of the Pāṇḍavas with only seven survivors.

There is thus no doubt that Kṛṣṇa now sided with the Pāṇḍavas and was for war against the Kauravas whom he considered to be in the wrong. It is also true that, for winning what he called the war of righteousness, he was ready to break the laws of warfare and chivalry. For securing the share of the Pāṇḍavas, Kṛṣṇa was even more determined than the Pāṇḍavas themselves for the war, even if it meant the destruction of the race. It may be anybody's guess that, had Kṛṣṇa with his great army put his entire weight for peace and maintain a just posture of neutrality, his belated attempt as a mediator might have averted the great catastrophe. But he appears to be more interested in crushing Duryodhana for his unrighteous deeds and, in establishing the law of righteousness, in waging war than in preventing it. Actually what came out of the *Mahābhārata* War were appalling slaughter, misery and almost the extinction of the flowers of the country. The victors felt no less forlorn and sad than Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Gāndhārī. Even the righteous Pāṇḍavas perished in the snowy Himalayas for their unrighteous deeds or thoughts. The tragic uselessness of war as a solution of any problem was clearly brought out at the end. And the problem stares again and again in our face whether the obstinacy and ambition of a man or a group will always be allowed to invite carnage on the earth, and wiser counsels will always be drowned. Can right and peace co-exist? Which is better, peace or right? This is an eternal question which the Great Wars have not answered convincingly.

VI

The Mahābhārata and Indian Archaeology*

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i

The Mahābhārata, which has undergone changes through centuries, possesses neither any structural integration of its own nor is it to be ascribed to any particular period. There are, of course, a few incidental or indirect textual or inscriptional references to certain elements of the *Mahābhārata* story; but unfortunately there is no contemporaneous archaeological evidence in confirmation of a single *Mahābhārata* event. In fact, the finding of the traces of the physical or material existence of the culture represented in the *Mahābhārata* has long been a desideratum. It was only in 1950-52 that an attempt was made towards that direction through excavations at Hastināpura, one of the capital cities of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas. The excavations, though primarily designed to determine the sequences of Painted Grey Ware discovered from the Gaṅgā-Yamunā Doab, claimed to have unearthed evidences in respect of a particular incident which happened after the Battle of Kurukṣetra as well as of the material equipments of the *Mahābhārata* people in particular and of the Aryans in general.

ii

Hastināpura (Meerut District, U.P.) standing on the bank of the Gaṅgā was the traditional capital of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas.[1]

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1 That the city of Hastināpura stood on the bank of the river Ganges is referred to in the *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyaṇa* and other texts (*Mbh.*, I. 128; *Rām.*, II. 68. 13); cf. *anugaṅgaṁ Hastināpuram* in the *Mahābhāṣya* (Raychaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India*, p. 43).

After the retirement of the Pāṇḍava brothers from the world, Parīkṣit, the grandson of the third Pāṇḍava, became the king of Hastināpura. If the story of the struggle between Parīkṣit and the Nāgas as described in the *Mahābhārata* has any historical bearing, it may be presumed that the Pāṇḍava king had to fight hard against the Nāgas of the North-West, whose centre of activities might have been Taxila, and that he, most probably, lost his life in that struggle.[2] Parīkṣit's son Janamejaya did not fail to take revenge and succeeded in bringing about disasters to the Nāgas and captured Taxila. It was in the court of Janamejaya at Taxila that the story of the *Mahābhārata* was recited by Vaiśampāyana. After Janamejaya, there might have been some family feuds which ultimately brought about a division of the kingdom. Kakṣasena, a brother of Janamejaya, probably established a separate kingdom at Indraprastha; but the main line continued to rule at Hastināpura.[3] Janamejaya was succeeded by his son Śatānīka who in his turn was followed by Aśvamedhadatta. The next king was Adhisīmakṛṣṇa who was succeeded by his son Nicakṣu. According to the Purāṇic tradition, it was during the reign of Nicakṣu that a great tragedy befell the kingdom of Hastināpura. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* refers to a great devastation of crops caused by locusts, and it has been supposed that this incident happened during the reign of Nicakṣu.[4] Still more serious was the great devastating flood which swept away Hastināpura, and Nicakṣu had to leave the city, and probably the capital was transferred to Kauśāmbī (modern Kosam near Allahābād). This event is echoed in the *Purāṇas* in the following words:

Gaṅgay=āpahṛte tasmin nagare Nāgasāhbaye |
tyaktvā Nicakṣur=nagaraṁ Kauśāmbyāṁ sa nivatsyati ||[5]

"When the city of Hastināpura (Nāgasāhvaya) is carried away by the Ganges, Nicakṣu will abandon it and will dwell in

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2 *Mbh.*, I. 41-44. 1692; *Vedic Age*, ed. Majumdar, p. 328.
3 Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 320.
4 *Ibid.*, p. 320; Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
5 Pargiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, p. 5.

Kauśāmbī."[6] But there are different readings in the Purāṇas. In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, the expression is : *Gajāhvaye hṛte nadyā Kauśāmbyāṁ sādhu vatsyati.*[7] In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (4. 21), we are told :

Śatānīkād=Aśvamedhadattō bhavitā |
tasmād=apy=Adhisīmakṛṣṇaḥ |
Adhisīmakṛṣṇāt Nicakṣuḥ yo Gaṅgay=āpahṛte Hastināpure Kauśāmbyāṁ nivatsyati |

It is thus clear that a flood of the Ganges swept away Hastināpura, and Nicakṣu had to make Kauśāmbī his abode.

This devastating incident of sometime after the Bhārata War along with some cultural equipments of the *Mahābhārata* period has been claimed to have received confirmation in certain evidences revealed by the excavations at Hastināpura. The excavator, B. B. Lal, in his excavation report, has drawn some very important 'provisional conclusions' from the evidences unearthed at Hastināpura.[8] It would be worthwhile to mention here some of the findings of the excavator.

iii

The Hastināpura excavations revealed five periods of occupation.[9] The earliest one, i.e. period I (1 to 1½ ft. in thickness), is characterised by what the excavator calls 'Ochre-coloured Ware' which has been also recovered from other Gangetic basin sites.[10] At Bahadurabad (Saharanpur Dist., U.P.) similar ware has been found also with a copper-board.[11] The next period, i.e. period II (6′ to 7′, occupational), is dis-

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6 *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 5. Hastināpura is known by different names such as Gajapura, Gajāhvaya, Nāgāhvaya, Vāraṇāhvaya, Vāraṇasāhvaya, Nāgapura, Gajasāhvaya, etc. Cf. *Mbh.*, I. 206 ; XIV. 14, 52, 85 ; XV. 37-39 ; XVIII. 5 ; Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 321 ; Pargiter, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.

8 *Ancient India*, Nos. 10-11, pp. 150-51.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

10 *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 146.

11 *Archaeological Remains, Monuments and Museums*, Part I, p. 12.

tinguished by the Painted Grey Ware.[12] It was towards the end of this period that a great flood occurred 'which cut away a considerable portion of the settlement, as indicated by the erosional scar on the mound'[13] and which ultimately led to its abandonment, and the site remained uninhabited for sometime. The cultural assemblage of Period II consists of Painted Grey Ware, use of copper as the chief metal (though iron lumps and slags, if not iron, were found in the uppermost level of the period), mud walls or use of mud bricks (only a fragmentary baked brick was found), weights of chert, glass bangles,[14] terracotta animal figurines, terracotta discs, feeding cups, charred grains of rice and remains of horse, deer, pig, buffalo, sheep, cattle, etc.[15] This period was followed by a break, and subsequently, in Period III, the users of Northern Black Polished Ware settled at the site. This period is also characterised by the use of punch-marked coins,[16] etc.

As to the chronological sequences and dating of these three periods, the upper and lower limits have been determined on two datum points, namely (i) Painted Grey Ware of Period II suppossed to be definitely later than the Harappan culture and (ii) Northern Black Polished Ware of Period III ascribed to c. 6th century B.C.[17] Accordingly, the upper level of Period I has been ascribed to c. 1200 B.C. and Periods II and III to 1100-800 B.C. and to early 6th century to early 3rd century B.C. respectively. But there is no datable material in these three periods, and it is on the basis of the Painted Grey Ware and Northern Black Polished pottery having their counterparts at Tilpet, Rupar, Kauśāmbī, Ahichatrā, etc., that

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12 *Ancient India, op. cit.*, pp. 11, 146.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

14 The find of glass bangles at Hastināpura in Period II has been supposed to be the earliest in India. See Wheeler, *Early India and Pakistan*, p. 130.

15 *Ancient India*, Nos. 10-11, Table I.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

17 *Ibid.*, pp. 21-24.

the dating of the three earlier periods has been determined.[18]

These are the evidences from which the excavator has drawn some 'provisional conclusions' of great import. He concludes that the date of the *Mahābhārata* War falls within Period II, and that the evidence of flood in the upper level of the same period alludes to the flood which is described in the Purāṇas as occurring during the reign of Nicakṣu,[19] and that this flood brought about 'enormous loss of life and property', and as such there was an abandonment of the site, the capital being transferred to Kauśāmbī.[20]

iv

A discussion on the findings of the excavator at Hastināpura involves a critical examination of (i) the question of the equation of the flood evidence at Hastināpura with the Purāṇic flood-legend associated with the reign of Nicakṣu; (ii) the dating of the Bhārata War and of Period II at Hastināpura; (iii) the equation of cultural equipments of Period II at Hastināpura with the *Mahābhārata* culture; (iv) the association of Painted Grey Ware with the *Mahābhārata* people and the Aryans in general.

Let us first of all examine the evidences of flood and the consequent transference of the capital to Kauśāmbī from Hastināpura. Regarding the evidences of flood at Hastināpura, the excavator tells us that "there occurred a great flood in the river, which cut away a considerable portion of the settlement, as indicated by the erosional scar on the mound. While most of the eroded material must have been carried away by the turbulent waters of the river far downstream, a part of it

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18 *Ibid.*, p. 23. At Rupar, the Harappans were followed by the P.G.W. people who have been supposed to have introduced glass. See *Archaeological Remains, Monuments and Museums*, Part I, pp. 8-9.

19 *Ancient India*, Nos. 10-11, p. 150.

20 *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 150-51. The excavator further believes that the flood brought about the end of the P.G.W. settlement at Hastināpura. See *Archaeological Remains, Monuments and Museums*, Part I, pp. 13, 52.

managed to settle down in the river-bed close by. This was revealed by a number of borings made in the Khādar area, within 200 yards of the mound; ancient pottery was recovered as many as 45-50 feet below the sub-soil water level."[21] The effects of the flood proved disastrous. The excavator continues, "the flood, heavy as it was, must have entailed an enormous loss of life and property. The inhabitants seem to have been so much upset that they decided to abandon the site. Consequently, there was no habitation at Hastināpura for some considerable time."[22]

In the very begining, it is to be noted that the evidence of flood-erosion was found only in one of the four cutting, i.e. Hist. I measuring 590′ in length and 21′ to 44′ in width,[23] which yielded no Painted Grey Ware because the flood has been supposed to have carried away all the strata from the eastern side.[24] Secondly, the excavator himself contends that the flood washed away only a part of the settlement. This means that the flood affected the settlement only to a limited extent, which is also clear from the section of Hst. I.[25] Thirdly, could such a flood which washed away only a portion of the settlement entail "an enormous loss of life and property"? No evidence of the loss of human life could be produced, as no skeletal remain has been found. The excavations, no doubt, yielded some animal remains;[26] but there is hardly any evidence to prove that they were the victims of flood. Fourthly, there is again no evidence of the loss of property excepting, of course, Painted Grey Ware. This also seems doubtful. It is improbable that the flood carried away all the evidences of Painted Grey Ware; at least a few specimens should have been left *in situ*. Fifthly, as to the demolition of houses or buildings caused by the flood, no tangible evidence could be produced. The structures exposed at Hastinā-

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21 *Anc. Ind.*, Nos. 10-11, pp. 14-15.
22 *Ibid.*, p. 15 (cf. Lal. *Indian Archaeology since Independence*, p. 20).
23 *Ibid.*, p. 25.
24 *Loc. cit.*
25 *Ibid.*, Plate XXIII.
26 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

pura in Period II do not give us any indication of the remains of a capital city. According to the evidence unearthed, Period II witnessed only the use of mud-bricks,[27] and we do not also know as to how and to what extent these mud-brick structures were demolished by flood. Lastly, if there be no sufficient grounds to justify the contention that there was 'an enormous loss of life and property', how could the tragedy upset the people to such an extent that they abandoned the site altogether? Even if there was a flood, as is proved by the traces of erosinal scars, no definite evidence of such a calamity, which might have disturbed the entire settlement, appears to have been discovered. On the other hand, even if a flood occurred, there was little possibility of the wholesale migration of the people. In the case of a flood, the affected people generally take shelter in an elevated region nearby till the flood retreats and, with the flood receding, the people normaly come back and reestablish their settlements. Hence the question of the site being left unoccupied for a considerable time does not arise at all. This might have been possible if there were frequent floods from the river, for which, however, there is no evidence. In this connection, it would be interesting to refer to the opinion expressed by Agrawal and others, who conclude form the results of the Radio Carbon analysis of certain samples from Periods II and III, that "there does not appear much gap between the end of Period II and the beginning of Period III". In this particular case, the flood affected only a part of the settlement; and as such there is little justification to hold the view regarding the consequent abandonment of the site for a 'considerable time'. Accordingly, the question of the site being left unoccupied for a 'considerable time' does not arise at all.

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27 *Ibid.*, p. 25.

28 *Current Science*, Jan. 20, 1964, No. 2, pp. 40-42 (reprint)—'Radio Carbon Dates of Archaeological Samples' by Agrawal, Kusumgar and Sarma, p. 3.

If the Purāṇic story is to be relied upon, the transference of the capital from Hastināpura to Kauśāmbī might have been due to some other reasons as well. Even Pargiter is not in favour of accepting the view that the flood described in the Purāṇas caused this transference. He thinks that, in such a case, "Nicakṣu could have chosen any southern town near by as a new capital, and there was no necessity to move three hundred miles south across."[29] Pargiter further contends, "It is quite likely that he (Nicakṣu) was driven south by the pressure from the Punjab."[30] Again the Vatsas of Kauśāmbī were the friends of the Pāṇḍavas and helped the latter in the great battle.[31] Does not this transference of the Pāṇḍava capital from Hastināpura to Kauśāmbī mean subjugation and capture of a friendly State ?

V

The next question is the equation of the evidences of the flood in Period II Hastināpura with the Purāṇic legend of flood occurring during the reigning period of Nicakṣu who transferred the capital to Kauśāmbī. With this is intimately connected the question of the dating of Nicakṣu's reign and of the Bhārata War. The dating of the different elements in the *Mahābhārata* is speculative. Without taking into consideration the datings arrived at by astronomical calculations which are beyond the perview of our knowledge gathered from history and archaeology, it would be better to rely on the available Purāṇic evidences of historical import.[32] It is of course extremely risky to place

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29 Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, p. 285.

30 *Loc. cit.*

31 *Ibid.*, 269-70.

32 For a discussion on astronomical calculations, see Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. III, pp. 902-23 ; Pusalker, *Studies in the Epics and Purāṇas*, pp. 12-24, 74-76 ; *J I H*, Vol. XVI, Part iii ; *J R A S B*, Letters, Vol. III ; *J A S B*, Vol. XXI, pp. 211-20 ; etc. According to the Aihole inscription dated 634-35 A.D. (*Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VI, pp. 11-12), 3735 years passed since tthe Bhārata War. This fixes the date of the

absolute reliance on the Purāṇic statements which consist of contradictory, confused and sometimes ambiguous narration of events. Yet, as there is no other tangible source, we shall have to depend on the Purāṇic statements. The *Mahābhārata* recounts the tale only up to the reign of Janamejaya and, for the history of his successors, we are entirely dependent on the Purāṇic accounts. The Purāṇas narrate the genealogy from Abhimanyu and Parīkṣit to Adhisīmakṛṣṇa, the fourth in descent, as already past. But some *Purāṇas* are said to have been recited during the reign of Adhisīmakṛṣṇa, from whom the prophetic narration of the royal genealogy begins.[33]

The Purāṇas give the lists of the succession of rulers of the different dynasties along with the duration of the reigns and, sometimes, the reigning periods of the individual kings are also given. This may help us to arrive at a tentative conclusion regarding the date of the Bhārata War. Without entering into details, it may be pointed out at the very outset that the Purāṇas supply us with different durations of the intervening period between the Bhārata War and Mahāpadma Nanda of Magadha (4th century B. C.).[34] In the first place, we are told in some Purāṇas that, between the Bhārata War and Mahāpadma's coronation, there ruled over Magadha 22 Bārhadrathas, 5 Pradyotas and 10 Śiśunāgas; but the total duration has been

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War at 3102 B.C. See Raychaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India*, p. 27. From the Nidhanpur copper-plate inscription of Bhāskaravarman (*Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XII, p. 65), of the 7th century A.D., it is learnt that Bhagadatta, son of Naraka, the ancestor of the dynasty, was killed by Pāṇḍava Arjuna. After Bhagadatta's son Vajradatta, his descendants ruled for 3000 years and then Puṣyavarman became the king of Kāmarūpa. Bhāskaravarman was the twelfth in descent from him. By allowing an average of 20 years, it is possible to arrive at 2500 B.C. as the time of the War. See Kane, *op. cit.*, pp. 898-99. Some again have tried to find out the date of the Bhārata War form the information supplied by the fragments of Megasthenes. See McCrindle, *Ancient India*, p. 115. But all these dates appear to be highly improbable.

33 Pargiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, pp. vii-ix.

34 Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, p. 287.

variously given as 1498, 1408 and 938 years.[35] Fixing Mahāpadma's coronation at 382 B.C. (after Pargiter), the date of the Bhārata War is to be placed at 1888 B.C. or 1790 B.C. or 1320 B.C. Further, in the *Vāyu*, *Matsya* and *Bhāgavata Purāṇas*, it has been stated that 1050 or 1015 or 1500 years passed between the inauguration of Mahāpadma's reign and the birth of Parīkṣit.[36] Out of the figures 1050, 1015 or 1500, Kane has accepted 1500.[37] It has been also contended that this inflated figure is due to the inclusion of the Pradyotas as the rulers of Magadha.[38] This Puranic statement has not been, however, accepted by Raychaudhuri on the ground that the account is full of discrepancies. This is proved by the statement that the interval between Pulomāvi and Mahāpadma is 836 which places the former at about 410 A.D.[39] But, if we accept the Purāṇic statement, the Bhārata War is to be ascribed to 1432 or 1397 or 1882 B.C. Thirdly, according to the Purāṇic testimony, Mahāpadma exterminated the Kṣatriyas and, uptil then from the time of the Bhārata War, there reigned contemporaneously 24 Aikṣvākus, 24 Kāśis, 28 Haihayas, 32 Kaliṅgas, 25 Aśmakas, 36 (or 26) Kurus, 28 Maithilas, 23 Śūrasenas and 20 Vītihotras. Pargiter thinks that this enumeration is much easier and simpler than the period of duration.[40] By ascribing a period of 20 years for the destruction of the Kṣatriyas, Pargiter places the accession of Mahāpadma at 382 B.C.[41] The number of the Kuru kings given in the Purāṇas is 26 or 36, and Pargiter accepts 26 because it accords with the numbers relating to the other royal families.[42] Then by ascribing an average of 18 years for each reign, he arrives at 850 B.C. as the date of Adhisīmakṛṣṇa (18×26=468

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35 *Ibid.*, p. 179 (cf. *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, pp. 13-22).

36 *Ibid.*, p. 180; *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, p. 58.

37 *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. III, pp. 899-900.

38 Pusalker, *Studies in the Epics and Purāṇas*, p. 77.

39 Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

40 Pargiter, *Anc. Ind. Hist. Trad.*, pp. 180-81.

41 The date of the accession of Candragupta is placed at 322 B.C. and the Nandas ruled for 80 years, i.e. 402 B.C.—20=382 B.C.

42 Pargiter, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-82.

+382=850), from whose reign the prophetic sections of the Purāṇas begin. This dating is claimed to have been checked by him from the study of the list of the Magadhan kings, i.e. 16 Bārhadrathas, 5 Pradyotas and 10 Śiśunāgas, i.e. 31 reigns for 558 years.[43] In order to find out the date of the Bhārata War, five more reigns between Adhisīmakṛṣṇa and Yudhiṣṭhira are to be added. For these reigns, Pargiter adds 100 years and thereby comes to 950 B.C. as the date of the War.[44] It is, however, to be noted that an average of 18 years per reign is very low. On the other hand, his ascription of 18 years is arbitrary. In one case he assigns 18 years while in another 20 years per reign for five kings. Pargiter has not given any credence to the specific statement made in the Purāṇas that 1050 or 1015 years passed between the birth of Parīkṣit and the coronation of Mahāpadma Nanda, in which case, the Bhārata War is to be placed at 1432 or 1397 B.C. This is also more or less the dating arrived at by Altekar from the study of the Vaṁśāvalī lists of teachers given in the Vedic texts.[45] Raychaudhuri, however, arrived at the 9th century B.C. as the date of the Bhārata War on the basis of the Vedic lists of teachers and students.[46] It appears, however, that the Purāṇic evidences clearly point to a dating of the Bhārata War which cannot be later than the 15th century B.C.

vi

The excavator at Hastināpura has, however, accepted Pargiter's dating as it accords well with his dating of Period II. From the archaeological sequences, the said Period has been ascribed by Lal between 1100 and 800 B.C. It follows, accordingly that Period II was in occupation for three hundred years. Therefore, Hastināpura was in continuous occupation even from

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43 *Ibid.*, p. 182.

44 *Loc. cit.*

45 *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 1939, pp. 68-77. Subsequently he changed his opinion and agreed with Pargiter's dating. See *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Gauhati Session, Vedic Age, p. 269.

46 *Pol. Hist. Anc. Ind.*, p. 36.

a period prior to the Bhārata War. If the War would have taken place in 950 B.C., it was during the reign of Nicakṣu, the 6th in descent from Parīkṣit, that the flood occurred—6×18 (accepting Pargiter's average)=108+842=950—in 842 B.C. This agrees with the archaeological dating with a margin of 42 years. On the other hand, if the Bhārata War took place in the 15th century B.C., i.e. 1432 B.C., the reign of Nicakṣu is to be placed in 1234 or 1199 or 1324 B.C. This does not, however, agree with the dating of Period II and the flood at Hastināpura. Besides, it is generally accepted that the Aryan immigration did not take place later than c. 1400 B.C., the date of the Boghazköi inscription. The lowest level of Period II is dated at 1100 B.C. In that case, we have a margin of about three hundred years for the development of the mass of Vedic texts and Epic literature. There is no reason for doubting that the Epic literature appeared later than the Vedic texts, and, as such, it does not seem probable that the whole mass of literature developed within such a short period of time. It does not seem plausible that the Aryan immigration in India had taken place by that time, though this has been justified by Wheeler on the basis of archaeological findings at Harappā.[47] Wheeler is in favour of bringing down the date of the arrival of the Aryans to about 1500 B.C. which has been supposed to be the date of the end of the Indus civilisation.[48] Again, Lal thinks that the Painted Grey Ware is also to be ascribed to the period from 1500 B.C.[49] This is not in accord with the occurrence of Painted Grey Ware in Period II at Hastināpura dating from 1100 B.C. to 800 B.C. It appears then that the dating of the upper level of Period II at Hastināpura can hardly be equated with the reign period of Nicakṣu or 'the *Mahābhārata* time'.

The dating of Period II and its equation with the *Mahābhārata* time as reconstructed by Lal do not appear to be probable if we take into consideration the history of the foundation of the city of Hastināpura and the genealogy of the

47 Wheeler, *Early India and Pakistan*, p. 144; *Indus Age*, pp. 92-93.
48 *Ancient India*, No. 3, pp. 78-83.
49 *Ibid*, Nos. 10-11, p. 150.

rulers given in the Purāṇas. According to some passages in the *Mahābhārata*, Hastināpura was actually founded by Duṣyanta and Bharata.[50] But the city was certainly named after Hastin, the fifth successor of Bharata. It is quite likely that Duṣyanta and Bharata first established their capital at Hastināpura and subsequently Hastin enlarged it and gave his name to it.[51] The Kaurava genealogy as reconstructed by Pargiter from the Purāṇas shows that the line originated from Duṣyanta and Bharata and there were no less than 30 kings up to Abhimanyu, i.e. up to the Bhārata War.[52] But there are altogether 36 generations up to the reign of Nicakṣu. Even if we accept Pargiter's average of 18 years for each reign, the total reigning period comes to 648 (36×18=648) years. Further, there were 30 generations up to Abhimanyu, i.e. 540 (30×18=540) years. If we accept Pargiter's contention that the Bhārata War took place in 950 B.C., it is to be admitted that Hastināpura was in continuous occupation for 648 years (including the reigns up to Nicakṣu) and that the city came into existence by about 1598 (950+648=1598) B.C. This dating, however, collides with the dating of the Aryan immigration into India. On the other hand, if we take into consideration only the generations directly connected with the *Mahābhārata* story, the number comes to 10 generations, i.e. from Śāntanu to Nicakṣu. By ascribing 18 years to each reign, the total reign period of 10 generations comes to 180 years. This figure also becomes too short for the total duration of Period II at Hastināpura. It is not also possible to accomodate so many generations since the establishment of the city of Hastināpura within a period of 300 years ascribed to Period II by the excavator. All these certainly disturb the whole chronological sequence at Hastināpura determined by the excavator, and as such Period II can hardly be said to represent the '*Mahābhārata* time'.

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50 *Mbh.*, VII. 68. 2384; XII. 29.939; *Vedic Age*, p. 270.

51 *Mbh.*, I. 95.3787; *Vāyu*, 99.165; *Matsya* 49.42; *Viṣṇu* 19.10; *Bhāgavata*, IX. 21.20; Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, p. 273.

52 *Anc. Ind. Hist. Trad.*, pp. 146-49, 273.

Another important point is also to be taken into consideration. The excavator has attributed the whole of Period II to the '*Mahābhārata* time'. Does it suggest that all the kings from Bharata to Nicakṣu or from Śāntanu to Nicakṣu belonged to this period? It sounds absurd. This, however, leads us to the question of the archaeological dating of Period II. It has been generally assumed that the fixed points for determining the dating of the earlier three periods at Hastināpura are the Painted Grey Ware and Northern Black Polished pottery. The Painted Grey Ware was preceded by the 'Ochre-washed Ware' in Period I. Ghosh and Wheeler have equated Period I with the Harappan culture, and the Painted Grey Ware has been supposed to be post-Harappan, and the end of Harappan civilisation has been fixed at 1500 B.C. The beginning of the Northern Black Polished pottery has been ascribed to the 6th century B.C. In such a case, the Painted Grey Ware is to be placed in the intervening period, i.e. 1500 B.C. to c. 500 B.C. After the flood at Hastināpura, the site was left uninhabited for sometime and hence the upper level of Period II has been fixed at 800 B.C., though its beginning has been ascribed to 1100 B.C., for which there is no substantial evidence. But these two fixed points are also questionable. It has been suggested that the Painted Grey Ware is posterior to the Harappan culture. Wheeler says that the Painted Grey Ware at Hastināpura was 'preceded by a settlement which used Ochre-coloured pottery and copper implements'.[53] But, unfortunately, the excavator reports that, at Hastināpura, no copper was found in association with the Ochre-coloured Ware. How could then the Ochre-coloured Ware be associated with copper implements? Besides, no other evidence of the Harappan culture was found in Period I. It is therefore doubtful whether Period I at Hastināpura can be equated with the chalcolithic Harappan culture. Stratigraphically, the Painted Grey Ware pottery of period II is no doubt posterior to Ochre-coloured Ware: but there is no evidence to associate the latter with

53 *Early India and Pakistan*, p. 117.

Harappan culture. Accordingly, the dating of Painted Grey Ware has been made without any solid foundation. This is further supported by the fact that, in certain sites, painted Grey Ware actually occurs in a much later period. Even Wheeler prefers to ascribe the Painted Grey Ware to a period from the 8th century B.C.[54] The same is the case with the Northern Black Polished pottery. The ascription of Northern Black Polished pottery to early 6th century B.C. may or may not be possible with regard to its find at Taxila. But it is doubtful whether the Northern Black Polished pottery discovered in other sites should also belong to the same century. Even the Northern Black Polished pottery at Taxila has been ascribed by Wheeler to the 5th-2nd century B.C. Further Wheeler observes that the Northern Black Polished Pottery in the North-West (Taxila, Charsadda, Udegram, etc.) 'should mostly be equated with the spread of the Mauryan dominion from the Ganges to these parts after 323 B.C.'[55] Accordingly, Wheeler ascribes the Northern Black Polished pottery of 'north-westerly regions to the period 320-150 B.C.' and concludes that the Taxila dating 'may not be representative'.[56] As for instance, at Śiśupālgaḍh, the Northern Black Polished pottery occurs in a level above the Rouletted Ware, i.e. not earlier than the first century A.D.[57] In fact, the Northern Black Polished pottery has also been found at many later settlements as well. Therefore, the supposed datum points are not absolute and hence questionable. On the other hand, there are good grounds to suggest that Periods I and II at Hastināpura belong to a still later period. This has been recently proved by the C-14 dating of certain samples from Periods II and III.

vii

In this connection, it would be interesting to refer to the results of the Radio Carbon analysis of samples from Hasti-

54 *Op. cit.*, p. 30.
55 *Ibid.*, p. 31.
56 *Loc. cit.*
57 *Loc. cit.*

nāpura. Agrawal and others observe that the C-14 measurements suggest the spread of Period III between c. 400 B.C. and 100 B.C. and there does not appear to be much gap between the end of period II and the beginning of Period III.[58] It is thus clear that the dating of Period II is to be brought down to c. 400 B.C. Wheeler also thinks it safer to ascribe Painted Grey Ware to a period from 800 B.C. to 500 B.C.[59] Secondly, the contention of Lal that the site was uninhabited for sometime after the flood is also not supported by the results of Radio Carbon analysis. Accordingly then, the question of the equation of Period II with the *Mahābhārata* period and its upper level with Nicakṣu's reign when the flood from the Ganges occurred has no firm basis, and this is significantly negatived by C-14 dating. It is thus clear that even archaeological evidences do not lend any support to the equation of Hastināpura Period II with the *Mahābhārata*. This has been also hinted at by Wheeler who says that the equation may be right, but that the available archaeological evidence scarcely carries so long a chronology.[60] There is no evidence to think that the equation of Period II with the *Mahābhārata* time 'may be right'.

viii

As to the third point at issue, i.e. cultural equipments of Period II and their equation with the *Mahābhārata* period or culture, particular reference may be made to such elements as: (1) the use of mud bricks for construction; (ii) copper as the chief metal; (iii) charred grains of rice and (iv) Painted Grey

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58 *Current Science*, Jan. 20, 1964, reprint, p. 3; May 5, 1964, No. 9, pp. 266-69. The results of Radio Carbon dating: 1. Period III—(i) 1940 ± 110 (2000 ± 110); (ii) 2225 ± 110 (2290 ± 110); (iii) 2015 ± 95 (2075 ± 100); 2. Period II—(i) 2220 ± 110 (2285 ± 110); (ii) 2270 ± 110 (2335 ± 110); (iii) 2385 ± 125 (2455 ± 130); (iv) 2260 ± 95 (2325 ± 100); (v) 2450 ± 120 (2520 ± 125). For Atranjikhera, the C-14 dating is 1025 ± 100 B.C.

59 *Op. cit.*, p. 114.

60 *Ibid.*, p. 28.

Ware. While dealing with the Ganges civilization, Wheeler observes, "We may recognise in it the general urban background of the *Mahābhārata* without too much labouring of details : a picture of wealthy and jealous dynasties and polities, based upon a limitless and fertile soil and serviceable river communications."[61] But, without entering into details of the cultural equipments of the *Mahābhārata*, it would be absolutely futile to equate the Great Epic with Period II at Hastināpura, and therefore a few of the cultural elements yielded by excavations may be subjected to critical examination.

The structures of mud bricks discovered in Period II can be equated with the construction of the city described in the *Mahābhārata*. Wheeler contends that 'although the remains of this period (Period II).....show a developed township with an economy based on mixed farming, and with adequately constructed houses of which at present little is known.[62] But unfortunately there is hardly any evidence of a developed township in Period II nor of the economy referred to. On the other hand, the culture representd in Period II is strikingly too poor to be recognised as urban in character. Besides, it would be too much to associate these mud brick constructions with the urban patterns of Hastināpura as described in the *Mahābhārata*. The building activities in Period II do not give us any indication as to the remains of a capital city. The *Mahābhārata* contains detailed descriptions of the buildings of the cities of Hastināpura, Indraprastha, Khāṇḍavaprastha, etc. Without entering into particulars, we may refer to several such accounts in the *Mahābhārata*.[63] Even a causal perusal of the accounts of the cities and their buildings given in the *Mahābhārata* presents a different picture altogether. It would be unreasonable to hold

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61 Wheeler, *Early India and Pakistan*, p. 132.

62 *Ibid.*, p. 130.

63 *Mbh.*, I. 146. 11; 147. 17; 207. 28, 41-48; II. 1.13; 3.28; 1.18-20; 3.23;3. 18-20; 50. 25-36; 47.3-13; 11.14; 34. 18-24; 49.47-49; 56.18-22; III. 15.5-11; I. 3.133; III. 173; 168. 72; V. 1.2; 89.11-12; XII. 44; V. 197.13-14; 151.79-83; V. 85. 13-17; 8.9-11; XII. 37. 45-49; V. 86.18; VI. 68.23-26, etc.

that the palaces and buildings at Hastināpura were all made of mud bricks only. It is, however, to be admitted that the excavation was confined to a limited area; but even then it should have revealed a few traces of the construction of the city and its cultural equipments.

Secondly, it is unthikable that the age of the *Mahābhārata* had no knowledge of iron as the chief metal for making tools and other objects. Period II at Hastināpura, however, is familiar only with the use of copper as the chief metal. But the *Mahābhārata* shows wide acquaintance with iron which was indeed the chief metal. The weapons of war were primarily made of iron. Of the numerous iron war-weapons, particular reference may be made to *aṅkuśa* (goad), *asi* (sword), *kaṇaka* (iron balls), *kṣura* (razor-like object), *gadā* (mace), *nārāca* (arrow), *paraśvadha* (axe), *bhalla* (spear), *mudgara* (club), *śakti* (lance), *śataghnī* (an instrument covered with iron pins according to the *Śabdakalpadruma*), *śara* (arrow), *śūla* (spear), etc.[64] Iron shield is also referred to.[65] It has been also said that the arrows and swords made of iron or steel used to be immersed in oil to avoid rusting.[66] Besides the war weapons, there are also many references to domestic articles made of iron, of which particular mention may be made of axes, cutters, spades, etc.[67] Even fish-hooks and plough-shares were made of iron.[67a] Such references are quite sufficient to prove that iron was largely known to the *Mahābhārata*. The excavator at Hastināpura has further told us that the deposit preceding the Painted Grey Ware is Harappan.[68] This has also been upheld by Ghosh and Wheeler. But unfortunately, in Period I, no copper was found and, it would be too much to equate it with the chalcolithic Harappan culture. On the other hand,

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64 Details are to be found mostly in the Virāṭa-parvan. References may be made to I. 154.5; 139.6; 19.7.

65 VI. 31.15; VIII. 87.27.

66 IX. 24.56; V. 19.14; VII. 177.26.

67 *Kuddālaṁ dātra-piṭakam* (XII. 228.60; III. 107.23); *tath=aiva paraśūn śitān* (II, 51.28); *v=āsy=aikaṁ takṣato bāhum* (I. 119.15).

67a V. 34.13; III. 157.45.

68 *Ancient India*, Nos. 10-11, pp. 140, 150.

Period II is really characterised by the wide use of copper. The absence of iron among cultural equipments of Period II is significant, and is alone sufficient to negative its equation with the '*Mahābhārata* culture'.

ix

The next point relates to the discovery of charred cereals from a pit in Period II assigned to about the 9th-10th century B.C.[69] The charred cereals have been studied by Chowdhury and Ghosh of the Dehra Dun Institute, who identify them with rice (*orzya*) about 3000 years old,[70] 'probably the oldest record in the world'.[71] It has been observed that 'the discovery of rice at Hastināpura appears to be the oldest direct evidence to show its use three thousand years ago . . . . The use of rice husk as a binder for mud-plaster may not be an accident. It indicates the knowledge of rice and its byproducts to be much earlier than what the archaeological age of Hastināpura would show'.[72] Here the authors based their conclusion on the archaeological dating. But it has been already pointed out that the dating of Period II at Hastināpura is to be modified in the light of C-14 dating and other facts. In view of a later dating of Period II, the discovery of rice at Hastināpura cannot be considered as very ancient. Further, it has been found out that the pottery from Period I at Lothal contains impressions of rice husk. Radio Carbon dating of materials from period I at Lothal points to 2000 B.C.[73] In that case, the antiquity of rice is to be ascribed to about 2000 B.C.[74]

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69 *Ibid.*, p. 14.
70 *Ibid.*, pp. 121-24; *Science and Culture*, 1953, pp. 207-09.
71 *Ancient India, op. cit.*, pp. 120, 131.
72 *Ibid.*, p. 134.
73 *Proc. Ind. Ac. Scien.*, Vol. LVIII, pp. 148-49; *Current Science*, May, 1964, No. 9, pp. 266-69 (reprint, p. 4); *Radio Carbon*, Vol. V, 1963, pp. 273-82.
74 Sankalia, *Indian Archaeology Today*, p. 86.

Words like *dhānya*, *vrīhi* and *śāli* occur in the Vedic texts. In the *Ṛgveda*, the term *dhānya* occurs perhaps in the sense of all kinds of cereals. It is in the *Atharvaveda* that the term *vrīhi* has been used in the sense of rice. It has been accordingly suggested that the age of the '*Atharvaveda* and rice from Hastināpura is about the same'.[75] In the *Mahābhārata*, *vrīhi* and *yava* are the chief grains.[75a] It has been concluded from the remains at Hastināpura that 'the people of the upper Gangetic valley were well acquainted with rice and its uses', and that the people had been using rice long before the age Hastināpura indicates.[76] Here three points are to be taken into consideration, namely (i) the meaning of the term *dhānya* in the *Ṛgveda*; (ii) the age of the *Atharvaveda*; and (iii) the association of rice with the Aryans. As to the meaning of *dhānya*, the opinions of scholars differ. Some are of opinion that *dhānya* in the *Ṛgveda* means cereals in general while others think that the word has been also used in the sense of rice.[77] In that case, rice is also to be associated with the Aryans. This agrees well with the supposed ascription of the Painted Grey Ware of Hastināpura to the Aryans. In this connection, it is also interesting to note that rice does not occur at Mohenjodaro.[78] It may, therefore, be supposed that, if the Aryans had come from outside, they might have brought rice with them. This does not, however, seem likely because the oldest evidence of rice comes from the upper Gangetic valley. Secondly rice was not certainly an agricultural product of Sind and the Punjab at that time, i.e. when the Aryans first settled there. If it is so, then the Aryans must have learnt about the use of rice after their settlement in India and in course of their

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75 *Ancient India*, Nos. 10-11, p. 132.

75a *Vrīhirasaṁ yavāṁś=ca* (*Mbh.*, XIII. 93.33); *yat pṛthivyāṁ vrīhi-yavam* (*loc. cit.*, 93.44).

76 *Ancient India*, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-33.

77 Basu, *Indo-Aryan Polity*, pp. 90-92.

78 Marshall, *Mohenjodaro and Indus Civilization*, Vol. I, p. 27; Vats, *Excavation at Harappa*, Vol. I, p. 79.

migration towards the east. On the other hand, if the Aryans were acquainted with rice from the very beginning, it becomes apparent that they did not come from outside. The same argument can be advanced in respect of the attribution of the Painted Grey Ware to the Aryans. Secondly, the *Atharvaveda* which mentions *vrīhi* in the sense of rice is the latest of the Vedic Saṁhitās and cannot be ascribed to 1000 B.C., i.e. to Period II at Hastināpura. Moreover, S. K. Chatterjee has shown that the rice cultivation is of Austro-Asiatic origin. It is more primitive in India, and the Aryans did not certainly come to India with the knowledge of rice and rice cultivation. It follows that the Aryans, if they would have come from outside, might have learnt the use of rice from the indigenous people of India in course of their movements towards the east or rather the Gangetic valley. If the Aryans were the real authors of rice, they might not have come from outside, because it is probably in India that the oldest record of rice has been found.

X

This leads us to the discussion of the last point namely the association of the Painted Grey Ware with the *Mahābhārata* people and the Aryans in general. The said Ware comes from the well stratified Period II at Hastināpura which overlies the Ochre-coloured Ware and in some other places the underlying deposits are Harappan.[79] Period III at Hastināpura belongs to the early historical times. Thus there exists a *hiatus* between the Harappan and the early historical period. Lal has sought

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79 *Ancient India*, Nos. 10-11, p. 150: "In Sri Vats' trench can be seen thick deposits of pebbles, which contain stray sherds of the Harappan ware, but none of Painted Grey Ware. This tends to suggest that the Harappan sherds in the pebble layer are perhaps redeposited there. Since there are Painted Grey Ware sherds in the pebble layer, it appears that this ware appeared at the site only subsequently." It is, however, to be noted that the evidence has not been derived from stratified diggings.

to fill up this gap by ascribing the Painted Grey Ware to the Aryans. It has been also upheld that as the scene of the activities of the early Aryans was the Punjab and the Gaṅgā-Yamunā Doab, 'it may be surmised that the Painted Grey Ware people were not different from them'.[80] This ascription of Painted Grey Ware to the Aryans has been also upheld by Ghosh who says that the said Ware fulfils the criteria which have been outlined by him.[81] Its "geographical distributions raise the possibility that the P. G. Ware in reality belongs to the Aryans". It has been found that the Painted Grey Ware is well distributed over the areas covered by the Vedic Aryans. Numerous sites in the upper Gaṅgā and Sutlej basin and the Sarasvatī valley have yielded this kind of pottery,[82] e.g., Panipat, Tilpet, Pehoa, Mathura, Kurukshetra, Indrapat, Rampil, Bhagat, Rupar, Ahicchatra, the Ghagar valley, etc.[83] The Narmadā and the region south of it fall outside the Painted Grey Ware horizon.[84] So also is the eastern region. As such, Wheeler has observed that the Painted Grey Ware is the characteristic ware of the Gaṅgā-Yamunā Doab.[85] Lal has told us that some of the Painted Grey Ware sites are also to be associated with the *Mahābhārata* story.[86] Ghosh further contends that the Painted Grey Ware pottery is post-Harappan and is preceded by the historical period according to the discoveries made at Hastināpura.[87] Lastly, he concludes, "If the Painted Grey Ware does not represent that culture, we shall have to find out in the Northern Indian plains another wide spread culture between the dis-

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80 *Archaeological Remains, Monuments and Museums*, Part I, p. 7.

81 Ghosh, *The Problem of the Pre-Historic Culture of India and their Authors*, p. 5; *A Survey of the Recent Progress in Early Indian Archaeology*, p. 46.

82 *Ancient India, op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.

83 *Ibid.*, pp. 138-41. A long list of P.G.W. sites has been given by Lal.

84 Sankalia, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

85 Wheeler, *Early India and Pakistan*, p. 26.

86 *Ancient India, op. cit.*, p. 97.

87 Ghosh, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

appearance of the Harappans and the emergence of the historical period; but according to our knowledge no such culture existed."[88]

xi

From these findings of Lal and Ghosh, it is clear that the Aryans were the authors of the Painted Grey Ware. But before ascribing the authorship of the Painted Grey Ware to the Aryans it is desirable that we should take into consideration the evidences furnished by the *Ṛgveda* which is the only record for the early history and culture of the Aryans in India. Unfortunately, the Ṛgvedic evidences have not been taken into account while attributing the authorship of the Painted Grey Ware to the Indo-Aryans. Accordingly, we must seriously consider some relevant points arising out of it: (i) if the Aryans were the real authors of the Painted Grey Ware, the *Ṛgveda* should have contained definite or concrete references to pottery, more particularly to the wheel made pottery and its diverse uses; (ii) the ascription of the Painted Grey Ware to the Aryans proves that the potter's craft was well developed in the Ṛgvedic period; (iii) if wheel-made pottery was known to the Aryans, it should have been used in rituals, and (iv) lastly, if the Aryans were the real authors of the Painted Grey Ware, it should have been well distributed over the areas originally occupied by the early Vedic Aryans, and its prototypes should have been also found in other Aryan settlements outside India.

As to the first point it may be noted that the *Ṛgveda* contains only a few insignificant and obscure references to pottery and its uses. A few words supposed to mean earthen vessels are *kalasa, kumbha, ukhā, pacana, kośa*, etc., which may or may not mean earthen ware. These stray references in the *Ṛgveda* do not, however, prove that the Ṛgvedic Aryans used pottery extensively. On the other hand, the *Ṛgveda* is more acquainted with the extensive use of wooden vessels and uten-

88 *Loc. cit.*

sils for ritual and domestic purposes. If pottery was so widely used by the early Aryans, the *Ṛgveda* should have contained more direct references to its diverse uses. Secondly, the *Ṛgveda* does not contain any positive reference to the potter's wheel or the potter's craft. It is only in the later Vedic texts that there are references to the potter and his wheel. The potter's wheel (*kaulāla-cakra*) occurs in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XI. 8.1.1.). It is said, "Verily, even as the craft-wheel or a potter's wheel would creak if not steadied, so indeed were these worlds uniform and unsteadied." Sāyaṇa, while commenting on it, says, "Even as a cart-wheel not standing on the ground for want of the wooden rest or some other thing would wobble."[89] There are also references to the making of pottery. *Mṛttikā* is mentioned in the later *Saṁhitās* and *Brāhmaṇas*. A lump of clay is mentioned in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (VI. 4. 2.1) and *mṛtpaca* in the *Maitrāyaṇī Upaniṣad*. *Mṛt-pātra* and *pātra* made of clay (*mṛṇmaya*) occur in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (1.4 1.3-4). Further, in the *Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā* (XVI. 27), there is a clear reference to the potter, and the expression used is *kulāla-kṛta*, i.e. made by a potter. According to the commentator on the *Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā*, *kulāla* means 'a hereditary potter' i.e., son of a potter. Thus it is in these later Vedic texts that we have clear and distinct references to pottery and the potter. But the *Ṛgveda* is significantly silent about such references to pottery. It shows that the early Vedic Aryans or rather the Ṛgvedic hymn-composers had little to do with earthen ware. Moreover, pottery or the potter's craft does not figure in the long list of arts and crafts that can be drawn from the *Ṛgveda*. It is only in the later Vedic texts that the potter figures. In the Smṛti texts, the occupation of the *Kumbhakāra* has been described as the fashioning of earthen pots. According to Manu, Parāśara and others the *kumbhakāra* is a mixed caste; he is the issue of a garland-maker by a daughter of a blacksmith. But the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* has considerably raised the social status of the potter by describing him

89 S.B.E., Vol. XII, pp. v and 126.

as the issue of Viśvakarman by a Śūdrāṇī. Even to-day in certain parts of India, the potter belongs to the scheduled caste category; but, in Eastern India, more particularly in Bengal, his is a clean caste. The very fact that the potter occupies a lower social position is an indication of the non-Vedic and Nonaryan affiliation of the potter's craft.

Further, in the Ṛgvedic rituals wooden or leather vessels were mostly used. There is hardly any reference to the use of pottery. On the other hand, if pottery was ever used, it was certainly hand-made. Even to-day hand-made pottery is only used in orthodox Brahmanical ritualism. For the dressing of the *puroḍāsa* cake, the *Chāndogya-pariśiṣṭa* recommends hand-made platters as purer than those turned on the potter's wheel.[90] There was also the regular practice of using fresh earthen pots on every occasion. This happened to be the usual custom with the Buddhists as described in the *Mahāvaṁsa*.[91] The Vedic Aryans were indeed veritable performers of sacrifices and, if the use of earthen vessels was so well known to them, pottery should have been widely used in their rituals. But unfortunately there is no evidence to that extent in the *Ṛgveda*. Secondly, we learn from the later texts that the wheel-made pottery is to be associated with the Asuras, and as such it cannot be used in the Vedic sacrifices. We have been told that if a *piṇḍa* (ball of rice) is offered in the *āsura* vessels, the manes do not partake of it from there for ten or five years; the earthen vessel which is made by wheel is known as *āsura* and the earthen vessel made by hand is known as divine or sacred.[92] This is a clear indication that the wheel-made pottery is to be associated with the Non-aryan Asuras, and it cannot be used in orthodox Brāhmaṇical rituals. Therefore, the Painted Grey Ware which is primarily a wheel-made pottery (though hand-made pottery is not absent)

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90 R. Mitra, *Indo-Aryans*, Vol. I, p. 274.

91 S.B.E., Vol. XXIX, p. 173.

92 R. Mitra, *op. cit.*, p. 274—*Āsureṇa tu pātreṇa yatra dadyāt tilōdakam | pitaras=tatra n=āśnanti daśa varṣāṇi pañca vā || Kulālacakra-ghaṭitam=Āsuraṁ mṛṇmayaṁ smṛtam | tad=eva hasta-ghaṭitaṁ sthālī-y-ādi daivikaṁ bhavet ||*

cannot be associated with Vedic ritualism and with the early Vedic Aryans.

It has been claimed that the Painted Grey Ware is well distributed over the areas covered by the Aryans and the *Mahābhārata* people. The Punjab and the "Gaṅgā-Yamunā Doāb were the scenes of the early Aryan activities and as such the Painted Grey Ware people may be associated with them."[93] But some of the sites yielding Painted Grey Ware have little or no connection with the early Aryans or the *Mahābhārata* people. As yet no definite trace of the Painted Grey Ware has been noticed in the regions of the North-West through which the Aryans are supposed to have entered into India and where they certainly made their earlier settlements.[94] This kind of pottery has been, no doubt, found in certain parts of the Punjab and the neighbouring areas; but these find-spots do not appear to have been so intimately known to the early Aryans. The Gaṅgā-Yamunā valley which has largely yielded Painted Grey Ware was not so intimately known to the Ṛgvedic Aryans. This is proved by few references to these two rivers in the *Ṛgveda*.[95] The Aryans, in fact, migrated to this region in a subsequent period from the North-West or the region of the Saptasindhu.[96] If it be so, how is it possible to ascribe a local product of the Gaṅgā-Yamunā Doab to the early Aryans? The very fact that the Painted Grey Ware has been found in a large number of sites in the Gaṅgā-Yamunā basin proves that it might be an indigenous product of the region which was colonised by the Vedic Aryans in a later period, and that there is nothing to prove that the early Vedic Aryans were responsible for the introduction of this kind of pottery. Further, if the Vedic Aryans introduced this pottery, its traces should have been found in all the tracts traversed by them in course of their journey to India. But unfortunately, no trace of such pottery

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93 *Archaeological Remains, Monuments and Museums*, Part I, p. 7.
94 Sastri, *New Light on the Indus Civilisation*, pp. 114-15.
95 *The Vedic Age*, p. 142.
96 Raychaudhuri, *Studies in Indian Antiquities*, p. 55.

has yet been found along the supposed routes of Aryan migration.

The sites yielding Painted Grey Ware have been also associated with the *Mahābhārata* story.[97] The *Mahābhārata* shows acquaintance with a larger number of places of Northern India. But it has not been possible to recover Painted Grey Ware from all these places. It is true that some sites yielding Painted Grey Ware figure prominently in the *Mahābhārata* story; but finding of Painted Grey Ware in those places does not mean that they were the sites *par excellence* of the *Mahābhārata* people or represent the '*Mahābhārata* culture'. It does not also prove that the *Mahābhārata* people were the authors of the Painted Grey Ware. Moreover it has been already contended that Period II at Hastināpura cannot be ascribed to the '*Mahābhārata* time'. There cannot really be anything like the '*Mahābhārata* time' since the *Mahābhārata* does not belong to any fixed date. The Great Epic indicates compilation of materials belonging to different periods and, therefore, it would not be proper to associate a particular place or period with the *Mahābhārata* on the basis of a single item of culture.

The Painted Grey Ware has been ascribed to both the Aryans and the *Mahābhārata* people. This means that the pottery in question with its types and shapes was in continuous use from the time of the *Ṛgveda* upto the Epic age. At Hastināpura, the Painted Grey Ware has been found only in Period II dating from 1100 B.C. to 800 B.C. In such a case, how is it possible to accommodate the early Aryans and the *Mahābhārata* people within a short period of 300 years? It will not be also proper to accept the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas as the true representatives of the early Vedic Aryans.

Again, the types and chronology of the Painted Grey Ware are not uniform in all the sites yielding this kind of pottery. For instance, at Ahicchatrā this Ware is plain and occurs along with Northern Black Polished pottery.[98] This is an indication of the

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97 *Ancient India*, Nos. 10-11, pp. 9-10, 150-51.

98 *Ibid.*, No. 1, pp. 40-41; see pp. 18-19.

later dating of the Painted Grey Ware at Ahicchatrā. It has been, however, admitted that the 'area excavated was so small that the priority of the Painted Grey Ware to the Northern Black Polished pottery could not be asserted, though it appeared probable'.[99] Again, at Alamgirpur (Meerut District), the Painted Grey Ware has been found in association with iron and other pottery types and objects, mostly known from the Northern Black Polished pottery level.[100] Accordingly, it is suggested that the Painted Grey Ware here is represented at its later phase.[101] But the fact remains that Painted Grey Ware at Alamgirpur belongs to a much later period. Even at Kauśāmbī, Painted Grey Ware in Period I has been dated at 885-605 B.C. But the said Ware at this place is quite different from that of Rajasthan, Western U.P. and the Punjab. Again, iron occurs almost from the very beginning of the occupation at the site, and this particular ware has been also found in association with the Northern Black Polished Ware.[102] It is thus clear that the Kauśāmbī Painted Grey Ware pottery cannot be affiliated to the Hastināpura pottery. Similar differences in types and techniques may be detected if Painted Grey Ware recovered from all the sites are critically examined.

Moreover, Period I at Hastināpura has been labelled as Harappan. It has been already observed that the pottery in Period I does not show any resemblance to the Harappan culture. The Period I at Hastināpura is distinguished by the remarkable absence of copper.[103] In fact, the period in question has produced few remains. At least, there is no evidence whatsoever at Hastināpura, which would ascribe the pre-Painted Grey Ware level to the Harappans.

In conclusion, Ghosh points out that, as there is no other evidence of the existence of any other culture after the disappearance of the Harappan phase and the beginning of the

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99 *Archaeological Remains, Monuments and Museums*, Part I, p. 51.
100 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
101 *Loc. cit.*; also p. 54.
102 *Ibid.*, p. 54.
103 *Ancient India*, Nos. 10-11, p. 31.

historical period, Painted Grey Ware stands to be associated with the Aryans. If the Aryans were the real authors of Painted Grey Ware, other associated objects of Period II at Hastināpura should also bear the Aryan stamp. But unfortunately there is nothing to show that the associated objects also belong to the Aryans. It is true that, at the present moment, we have no archaeological evidence to fill up the gap between the end of the Harappan culture and the beginning of the historical period. But this does not justify the contention, on the basis of this single item of culture, that the Aryans are to be placed in between. For such an association, other cultural traits are also to be taken into consideration. It may be pointed out in this connection that ethnological investigations may throw light on this problem. Such investigations have at least proved the existence of a culture over the length and breadth of India, more particularly in the eastern and southern parts of the originally settled areas of the early Vedic Aryans. This culture may be called Muṇḍā-Drāviḍa.[104]

xii

Philological investigations made by savants like Schmidt, Lévi, Przyluski, Bloch, Chatterjee, Bagchi, etc., have proved beyond doubt the wide prevalence of the Muṇḍā-Drāviḍa culture all over India, and this is also supported by ethnological findings.[105] There is nothing to doubt that the so-called Indo-European-speaking invaders were greatly influenced by the Muṇḍā-Drāviḍa culture. This was largely due to the acculturation and racial admixture. The early Indian texts are also replete with evidence of such acculturation in all ages preceding and following the historical period. In this respect, the association of the wheel-made pottery with the Asuras is

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104 This point has been also raised by Ghosh in his subsequent paper on 'The Problems of the Proto-historic Cultures of India and their Authors' (Ms.). He does not, however, find any conflict with the hypothesis of the Aryan authorship of the Painted Grey Ware.

105 Bagchi, *Pre-Aryan and Pre-Dravidian in India*, pp. i-xxix, 3-127.

very significant. The Asuras were indeed the Non-aryans belonging to the Muṇḍā-Drāviḍa culture group.[106]

It would also be interesting to refer to the philological reconstruction of the Indo-Aryan languages of India made by Grierson. According to this reconstruction, the Indo-Aryan-speakers of Northern India are to be classified into two groups, viz. the Inner Band and the Outer Band. It has been observed that the Outer Band peoples were the earlier immigrants who were in possession of inner India before the migration of the second wave. According to Hoernle, the latest invaders probably entered into the Punjab like a wedge into the heart of the country already occupied by the first immigrants, forcing the latter outwards in three directions, east, south and west, and thereby giving rise to the Inner Band and Outer Band of the Indo-Aryan languages.[107] These latest immigrants were indeed the Vedic Aryans.

Ethnological investigations also point to the Inner Band peoples as dolichocephals and the Outer Band as brachycephals. But both were Indo-European-speakers. This hypothesis of more than one wave of Aryan immigration also finds support in recent archaeological discoveries in the Narmadā valley. Ghosh has drawn our attention to certain Iranian pottery types and painted designs in the chalcolithic Narmadā pottery which has been ascribed to the Irano-Indian compact supposed to have taken place before the advent of the Painted Grey Ware. Sankalia has also pointed out the possibility of the Malwa or Meheshwar-Nāvdāṭolī people as a mixed Aryan tribe from Iran.[108] He has attributed the chalcolithic culture of the Chambal, Narmadā, Tāptī and Godāvarī valleys to some such Aryan tribes.[109] Certain pottery types from Nāvdāṭolī of

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106 The term *Asura* has been also used in the *Ṛgveda* sometimes in the sense of a god.

107 *Indian Empire*, Vol. I, pp. 357-59.

108 Sankalia, *Indian Archaeology Today*, p. 97.

109 *Ibid.*, p. 98. Here Sankalia has gone to the extent of pointing out that the "Aryans were illiterate in spite of the high philosophical and spiritual content of the Ṛgvedic *mantrams*, in spite of the metaphysical

Phases I and III resemble the pottery from Sialk. Similar types have been also found at Ahar, Nāgdā, etc. All these findings refer to a contact with Iran and the excavator believes that 'there was an Aryan immigration from Iran into Central India'[110] But these analogous pottery types alone are not sufficient to prove Iranian immigration, and further evidences are required.[111] It is again very difficult to say anything definite as to whether this advent of the Aryans was earlier or later than the Painted Grey Ware people. Moreover, that even the Ṛgvedic Aryans did not belong to any homogeneous racial or cultural stock has been pointed out by Chanda. He distinguishes two social grades, viz. the *ṛṣis* and the warrior tribes. These two again did not consider themselves as offshoots of the same stock. Even within the *ṛṣi* clans, there were two groups, one claiming divine origin and the other adoption. These two classes again possessed variant physical characters.[112] From the ethnic peculiarities, it has been observed that the white- and the yellow-haired group migrated from the temperate northern region and the darker group from the tropics. The ancestors of the *ṛṣi* clans came earlier and those of the warrior tribes later. The warrior tribes came into direct contact with the *ṛṣi* clans and acknowledged their cultural superiority.[113] In such a case, the Vedic hymn-composers came much earlier. Chanda has also found out cultural differences between the two waves of Aryan immigrants. Thus the Aryans belonging to different waves of immigration cannot be affiliated to the same enthnic and cultural group.

If the hypothesis of more than one wave of Aryan immigration is accepted, we have to find out which one of the Aryan

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speculations of the *Upaniṣads* and in spite of the earliest etymological efforts of Yāska and the first systematic grammar of Sanskrit by Pāṇini". This observation needs no comment.

110 *Archaeological Ramains, Monuments and Museums*, Part I, pp. 19-21.

111 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

112 *Census Report of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Part i, p. 368.

113 Chanda, *Indo-Aryan Races*, pp. 11-13.

waves was the real author of the Painted Grey Ware. The early Vedic Aryans have been generally made responsible for this kind of pottery. In this connection particular reference may be made to the observation of Wheeler, "If the Aryans must be dragged into this picture, it is possible to suppose that P. G. Ware may represent the second phase of their invasion of India, when, from the Punjab, they entered and Aryanised the middle country of the Ganges-Jumna Doab, after picking up ideas and doubtless craftsmen in the Indus valley and the Baluch boderland."[114] Originally, Wheeler ascribed the C. H. pottery of Harappa to the Vedic Aryans.[115] But subsequently he thought that it might have belonged to the first wave of the Aryan immigrants and the Painted Grey Ware to the second wave. Such ascription of authorship of the two kinds of pottery to the two waves of Aryan immigrants is, frankly speaking, highly speculative. Later, even Wheeler observed, " . . . . it is a mere guess-work to suggest that its arrival in the Ganges basin may be associated with the secondary invasion of the Aryans."

Lastly, Ghosh regrets that the view "that the Painted Grey Ware represents the Vedic Aryans has gained currency in India, but this view has not found favour outside India . . . . "[116] It follows accordingly that the ascription of the authorship of the Paintel Grey Ware to the Aryans has not yet been established on solid facts of history. We must take into account all the facts stated above before finally ascribing the authorship of the Painted Grey Ware to the Aryans. Following the observation of Keith in respect of the possibility of the evolution of different ethnic types on the soil of India,[117] it may not be improbable that diverse cultural traits and complexes evolved in India. Instead of talking about the culture-bringers from outside, it would be worth while to trace the evolution of diverse

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114 *Early India and Pakistan*, p. 28.

115 Piggott, *Dawn of Civilisation*, p. 250.

116 *Op. cit.*, pp. 48-49.

117 *Aboriginal Races of India*, p. 9.

cultural traits here, on the soil of India. It is also to be admitted at the same time that the antecedent of the Painted Grey Ware is not as yet known. In the Gaṅgā-Yamunā valley, we have the sudden appearance of the Painted Grey Ware. Wheeler thinks that its 'technique had been already perfected elsewhere'.[118] He has also referred to a link between the Painted Grey Ware and the Sāhi--Tump pottery which is posterior to the Indus civilisation.[119] But this link is not so significant as to indicate the origin of the Painted Grey Ware from that kind of pottery. The finding of the antecedents of the Painted Grey Ware alone can solve the problem.

xiii

Moreover, the cultural equipments of Period II yielding Painted Grey Ware point to an essentially agricultural economy.[120] The Painted Grey Ware levels at Hastināpura or other sites reveal that the people belonged to an inferior culture. They lived in mud houses subsisting on rice and animal meat; they knew the use of copper and horse.[121] Such a cultural equipment is quite inadequate for the highly sophisticated and complex life of the *Mahābhārata* people and their metropolis or of the Aryans in general. Further, it has been already observed that Painted Grey Ware at Hastināpura is to be dated at a much later period than the one postulated by Lal. Even Wheeler is in favour of bringing down the date to 500 B.C. as the upper limit,[122] and the Radio Carbon analysis fixes the date of Period II at a still later epoch. In such a case also, the Painted Grey Ware cannot be ascribed to the *Mahābhārata* people or to the Aryans in general.

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118 *Early India and Pakistan*, p. 28.
119 *Loc. cit.*
120 *Ancient India*, Nos. 10-11, p. 14.
121 Sankalia, *Indian Archaeology Today*, p. 76; Sastri, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
122 *Op. cit.*, pp. 28-30.

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Further, the authorship of an archaeological cultural stratum should not be so hastily determined merely on the basis of one or two items of cultural equipments, however significant they may be. This is more so when an attempt is made to ascribe the Aryan authorship either to the Painted Grey Ware of Hastināpura or to the C. H. pottery of Harappa. The possibility of the evolution of such pottery types on the soil of India cannot be altogether ruled out. It requires a thorough and analytical study of this pottery and the associated finds from different parts of India. At least, in the present state of our knowledge, it would be premature to ascribe the authorship of the Painted Grey Ware to the Aryans or the *Mahābhārata* people. It would be better to wait for sufficient ethnological and archaeological materials before the authorship of Painted Grey Ware is attributed to the alien 'culture-bringers' like the Aryans.

Thus the cultural components of Period II at Hastināpura can neither be associated with the *Mahābhārata* period nor with the Aryans. The cultural equipments are too poor to be associated with a metropolis about which we have glowing description in the *Mahābhārata*. Hence, the association of Period II at Hastināpura with the *Mahābhārata* people and the Aryans in general has not been made on a solid archaeological foundation, and the whole reconstruction seems to be improbable in the light of the available materials.

xv

From the above discussions on the problems of the association of the *Mahābhārata* with the results of the excavations at Hastināpura it follows (i) that the flood evidence at Hastināpura (Period II) cannot be equated with the flood occurring during Nicakṣu's reign as described in the Purāṇas; (ii) that the archaeological dating of Period II at Hastināpura is not coeval with the *Mahābhārata*; (iii) that there is no one date

of the *Mahābhārata* and that the Bhārata War cannot be definitely ascribed to 950 B.C.; (iv) that the Radio Carbon analysis of the materials from Period II also does not confirm the archaeological dating; (v) that rice may be indigenous to India and that the Aryans cannot be regarded as the bringers of rice; (vi) that Painted Grey Ware cannot be ascribed to the *Mahābhārata* people or the Aryans in general; (vii) that the cultural assemblage of Period II at Hastināpura does not represent the *Mahābhārata* culture, and in reality, the cultural equipments of Period II are too poor to be associated with the Hastināpura metropolis of the *Mahābhārata*.

On the whole then, the excavations at Hastināpura yielded no tangible evidence which speaks of its association with the *Mahābhārata* or the Aryans in general.

Part II

PURĀṆIC GENEALOGIES

Proceedings of the Seminar

Second Day

Date : 18th September, 1965.

Time : 10-30 A.M. to 1 P.M. and 2 P.M. to 5 P.M.

Subject : Rājavaṁśa-varṇana of the Purāṇas.

Place : Asutosh Hall, University of Calcutta.

President : Dr. R. C. Majumdar, formerly Professor of History, Dacca University.

Participants besides the President :—

PROF. M. RAMA RAO,	Śrī-Veṅkaṭeśvara University, Tirupati;
PROF. B. P. SINHA,	Patna University;
DR. B. B. MAZUMDAR,	Do.;
SRI B. D. CHATTERJEE,	Burdwan University;
DR. SM. B. LAHIRI,	Jadavpur University;
SRI D. GANGULY,	Viśva-Bhāratī University, Santiniketan;
PROF. D. C. SIRCAR,	Calcutta University;
SRI R. K. BHATTACHARYA,	Centre of Advanced Study in A.I.H.C., Calcutta University;
SRI N. N. BHATTACHARYA,	Chinsurah, Hooghly District, West Bengal;
SRI A. K. CHAKRAVARTY, and others.	Calcutta;

Reporters : SM. G. DASGUPTA, SM. M. RAY, SRI S. DATTA and SRI S. P. SINGH.

Morning Session

At the outset, the President suggested that the papers contributed by the participants would be read in the morning session and that they would be taken up for discussion, one by one, in the afternoon.

Of the seven papers the authors of which were present, the first entitled 'Rājavaṁśa-varṇana in the Purāṇas' was read by the President Dr. R. C. Majumdar who attempted a general review and estimate of the Purāṇic genealogies.

Next Prof. D. C. Sircar read his paper entitled 'Nature of the Purāṇic Genealogies' in which the unsatisfactory nature of the evidence was sought to be proved.

Then 'The Purāṇas and their Bearing on Early Indian Dynasties' was read by Sri D. Ganguly who attempted a general survey of the Purāṇic dynasties.

Prof. M. Rama Rao next read his paper on 'The Post-Āndhra Dynasties in the Purāṇas'. This was followed by the 'Purāṇic Tradition of Agnimitra Śuṅga' read by Dr. Sm. B. Lahiri and 'The Early History of the Śaunakas' read by Sri A K. Chakravarty. The scope of these papers is indicated by their titles. The last of the seven papers was 'Lûnar Affiliation of Purāṇic Genealogy' read by Sri N. N. Bhattacharya.

Afternoon Session

When the discussion on the papers read at the morning session was taken up at 2 P.M. after a brief interval for lunch, Dr. B. B. Mazumdar referred to the genealogical variations in the Purāṇas and observed that these were due to the fact that the genealogical lists passed orally from one generation to another. He further observed that variations are not unexpected because India was not unified then. Prof. D. C. Sircar pointed to the omission of some of the important kings in the Purāṇic lists, e.g., the names of Rudra Śātakarṇi and Kṛṣṇa Śātakarṇi in the lists of the Andhras. Dr. R. C. Majumdar pointed out that such omissions were due to the fact that those kings, though some of them issued coins, ruled for short periods and, more-

over, their reign periods may not have been glorious and important. He also observed that the Purāṇic chroniclers often recognised only the important rulers of a dynasty. In this connection, Dr. B. B. Mazumdar drew attention to the fact that a class of people called *Bhāṭa* used to preserve genealogical accounts in ancient times and, according to him, priests were not the official record-keepers. Prof. M. Rama Rao, however, pointed out that there is evidence to show that maintaining the genealogical lists was the sacred duty of the priests in Āndhradeśa. Prof. Sircar observed that match-makers maintained genealogical lists of important families in Mithilā and Bengal, a *Pañjī* or *Kula-pañjī* literature having developed in both the areas as a result thereof.

Dr. R. C. Majumdar incidentally observed that Janaka was not the name of any particular king of Mithilā, but that it was the title of the rulers of Mithilā. He thanked Sri A. Chakravarty for his bold attempt in tracing the origin of the Śaunaka family.

Sri B. D. Chatterjee disagreed with Prof. Sircar's view that the early part of the Purāṇic genealogies dealing with Vaivasvata Manu and his successors cannot be genuine. He pointed out that the chronicles are of great value from the view-point of history, as the chroniclers preserved contemporary records and, in this connection, he referred to the historical chronicles of Egypt. Dr. R. C. Majumdar added that, in spite of the many defects of Purāṇic traditions, they cannot be rejected altogether as they are occasionally corroborated by other evidence. He further said that historians are bound to depend on the Purāṇic traditions for the period prior to the 6th century B. C., as there is no other evidence to reconstruct the history of that period. Prof. Sircar, however, did not believe that this fact at all made the Purāṇic evidence trustworthy.

Sri R. K. Bhattacharya disagreed with the view that the Ṛgvedic Aryans settled in the Western Punjab. According to him, there is evidence in the Vedas to show that the Aryans ruled over the Eastern Punjab and the adjoining region. He further argued that the Ṛgvedic reference to the Ruśama people exhibits Aryan knowledge of the Russians. The name Vaṅgṛda, mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*, stands, in his opinion, for the king

of Bengal. Prof. Sircar, however, did not consider any of the views of Sri Bhattacharya as worthy of serious consideration. He pointed out that Russia as a territory and the Russians as a people were known only from about the tenth century A.D.

Prof. B. P. Sinha shared the view of Prof. Sircar that there is a lot of discrepancy in the Purāṇic traditions. He said that all the Purāṇas do not mention the names of some important kings and, what is more, sometimes different Purāṇas suggest different names of kings, although the total number of kings suggested by the different Purāṇas may be the same. Thus the view of Sri B. D. Chatterjee that the Purāṇic accounts of the kings of the historical period is reliable is not at all acceptable. But that does not mean that the Purāṇas are of no value. He suggested that, before accepting any Purāṇic statement as historical, search should be made for a corroborating evidence from all possible sources and, according to him, archaeology may be of great help in this respect. He observed that the later Purāṇic genealogy is an admixture of Aryan and Non-aryan dynasties.

Referring to Prof. Sircar's paper, Prof. Rama Rao said that Pargiter's view regarding 18 years being the average duration of the rule of each Āndhra king does not seem to be tenable in view of numerous instances of kings having ruled for a very long time. He argued that, just as some people die premature death, others live for long. Since human longivity varies, Prof. Rama Rao thought that an average of the reign periods of kings is not a sound approach. As a case of long reign, he referred to Kākatīya Gaṇapatideva's rule of 64 years from 1199 to 1262 A.D. Prof. Rama Rao then observed that certain inscriptions giving accounts of temples are found to deal with political history and it has been found that ninety per cent of the information supplied is correct. Dr. B. B. Mazumdar pointed out that Queen Victoria ruled for 64 years (1837-1901 A.D.) and said that births and deaths take place as a rule of nature and, as such, an attempt to find out an average cannot be a correct approach.

Prof. Sircar remarked that most of the temple chronicles like the *Mādalā Pāñji* are late fabrications of very little historical

value. Prof. Rama Rao, however, was not inclined to accept Prof. Sircar's view. Regarding the question of average, Prof. Sircar observed that an average offers a rough idea and is not expected to give the exact reign period of any ruler of a dynasty. It is well known that some kings ruled for long and others for a short time, and that some people have long and others short lives. He pointed out that, if Rāṣṭrakūṭa Amoghavarṣa ruled for 64 years from 814 to 878 A.D. and Gaṅga Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga for 70 years from 1078 to 1147 A.D., their predecessors and successors must have had shorter reigns. Dr. R. C. Majumdar also thought that averages are useful and observed that, in the history of mankind, difference of even one hundred years is nothing. Regarding the reign periods of the Andhra kings, Prof. Sircar stated that no perfectly satisfactory conclusion is possible in the present state of our knowledge because the Andhras are said in the Purāṇas to have ruled variously for 300, 411, 456 or 460 years. Drawing attention to the conflicting figures and to the unanimous Purāṇic statement that the founder of the Andhra or Śātavāhana empire was a contemporary of the last Kāṇva king whose rule ended about three centuries after the foundation of the Maurya empire, Prof. Sircar said that the duration of more than 400 years for Śātavāhana rule must be regarded as wrong.

Turning to the meaning of *Itihāsa*, Prof. Sircar said that Dr. B. B. Mazumdar and others are inclined to understand it as meaning 'past events' or 'history'. But Prof. Sircar pointed out that *Itihāsa* is not 'history' as we understand it, but really means legends including mythological stories.[1] In order to prove his point, Prof. Sircar again quoted the stanza from the *Indra-Bṛhaspati-saṁvāda* contained in the Śānti-parvan of the *Mahābhārata*. The word *Itihāsa*, Prof. Sircar observed, has been used here in respect of a dialogue between the king and

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1 [The difference among various kinds of legends and stories is indicated in passages like *ākhyānān=itihāsāṁś=ca purāṇāni khilāni ca* (Manu, III. 232), while the unhistorical characteristic of such material is known from epic stanzas such as *ārṣy-ādi bahu-vyākhyānaṁ devarṣi-carit-āśrayam | itihāsam=iti proktaṁ bhaviṣy-ādbhuta-dharmayuk* ||—Ed.]

the priest of the gods, neither of whom is a historical figure. The *Mahābhārata* cannot be called history by any standard; yet it has been called 'the *Itihāsa* entitled *Jaya*'.

Prof. Rama Rao referred to two different words, e.g., *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa*, and argued that they should be distinguished, i.e. *Itihāsa* should be regarded as different from *Purāṇa*. Prof. Sircar did not accept Prof. Rama Rao's view and argued that originally the two words may have indicated 'older' and 'later' legends, but that gradually the distinction between the two seems to have been forgotten and *Itihāsa-Purāṇa* was sometimes used as a compound word to mean practically the same kind of legends.

Referring to Prof. Rama Rao's paper, Prof. Sircar observed that the contention that *Cuṭukula* represents a dynastic name, as held by earlier writers, is not correct, since it is found as a personal name on certain coins. He also pointed out how the same name is also found as *Cuṭuka* and *Cuṭukaḍa* and suggested that the personal name *Cuṭukula* was the Sanskritised form of a Dravidian personal name. Prof. Rama Rao, however, was not inclined to accept Prof. Sircar's view and observed that, if *Cuṭukula* is taken to be a personal name, it is difficult to explain the name *Cuṭukulānanda Sātakarṇi*. Prof. Sircar observed that *Cuṭukulānanda* is known to be the Sanskritised form of *Cuṭukaḍānanda*.

Prof. Sircar referred to the view that the Purāṇas only mention important kings and observed that this is not always true. He also did not accept the suggestion that the Śaunaka family was a Rāja-vaṁśa. According to him, it was a priestly family.

Dr. B. B. Mazumdar once again emphasised that, from the list of important and unimportant kings mentioned in the different Purāṇas, a genealogy of kings should have to be prepared. He, however, recognised that such a genealogy would be rather tentative.

Sri R. K. Bhattacharya once again raised the question of the meaning of the word *Itihāsa* and said that it should be taken separately from *Purāṇa*. History is an essential part of both *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa*. But *Itihāsa* treats *Dharma*, *Artha*,

Kāma and *Mokṣa* whereas *Purāṇa* deals with creation, genealogy, destruction, etc.[2]

Sri A. K. Chakravarty also expressed his full faith in the Purāṇic evidence. He quoted some verses from the Purāṇic and Vedic literature in order to show that some of the Ṛgvedic seers and kings such as Vasiṣṭha, etc., who are undoubtedly historical figures are also mentioned in the Purāṇas. He further mentioned the names of some kings from the *Ṛgveda*, and suggested that Aryan kings were ruling even 2000 years before the Bhārata War. He was in favour of the opinion that Yājñavalkya and Janaka represent family names and not personal names.

Prof. Sircar, however, pointed to the difficulty in proving the historicity of all the Purāṇic personages and the date of the *Ṛgveda* and to the problematical nature of the claim that the Aryan kings flourished 2000 years before the Bhārata War. He also observed that, in the late tenth *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgveda*, a confusion between historical and mythical figures is not improbable.

In his concluding presidential remarks, Dr. R. C. Majumdar observed that there is no doubt that the Purāṇic accounts suffer from many defects. No doubt again there is that they contain interpolations, discrepancies and even palpable errors. But, in spite of all these defects, the Purāṇas are quite helpful in reconstructing the history of ancient India and it is therefore not at all reasonable to neglect, reject, ignore or overlook the Purāṇic traditions. He reminded that the aim of the Seminar was not to find fault with the Purāṇas, but to make something out of the materials they contain. In this process, difficulties will be on our way; but the duty of the true historian will be to surpass those difficulties with the help of other available

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2 [*Dharm-ārtha-kāma-mokṣāṇām=upadeśa-samanvitam* |
pūrva-vṛtta-kathā-yuktam=itihāsaṁ pracakṣate || (*Mahābhārata*)
But, according to Sāyaṇa (*Tait. Ār.*, II. 9), legends like the story of the war between the gods and demons are *Itihāsas*, while those regarding creation, etc., are *Purāṇas*. Such explanations are, however, unsatisfactory. —Ed.]

evidence, both literary and archaeological. In this connection, he pointed out that, in the nineteenth century, it was a belief that India had no history before Alexander's invasion. The historians' researches have, however, shown now that the said belief has no value. Therefore, without making sweeping comments and rejecting things as useless, it is better to apply energy to find out what is important and relevant, i.e. the truth. In answering Prof. Sircar's argument regarding the meaning of *Itihāsa*, Dr. Majumdar said that *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* might include many things. Sometimes historical works contain legends just as legends sometimes contain history underneath. So, according to Dr. Majumdar, what is needed most is care and caution and that is again needed both while rejecting something as well as while accepting something.

At the end, Prof. Sircar thanked all the scholars for their patient hearing and participation in the discussions. He thanked especially Prof. Rama Rao and Prof. B. P. Sinha for their presence at the Seminar even under the abnormal conditions of the time. He also mentioned in this connection the representatives of the Burdwan, Viśva-Bhāratī and Jadavpur Universities, whom he described as 'our neighbours'. Then he thanked Dr. R. C. Majumdar for the trouble he took in presiding over the Seminars as well as for his efficient guidance of the deliberations. Finally, he again thanked all the participants for making the Seminar a success.

I

Rājavaṃśa-varṇana in the Purāṇas

R. C. Majumdar, Calcutta

There is now a consensus of opinion among scholars that it is not possible to draw up even an outline, of authentic character, of the political history of India before the time of Gautama the Buddha. Still the fact remains that India undoubtedly had at least the skeleton of a political history of more than thousand years before it. The only available data for reconstructing it are the lists of kings and some details about them preserved in the Purāṇas supplemented by the *Mahābhārata* (including the *Harivaṁśa*) and, in a minor degree, by the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Though the Vedic literature is purely religious in character and cannot be expected to deal with political history, it serves the very useful purpose of corroborating or correcting the data supplied by the above-mentioned literature. Among the Purāṇas, the most important for this purpose are the *Bhāgavata Vāyu, Matsya, Brahmāṇḍa* and *Viṣṇu*. These and other Purāṇas profess to narrate the history of India from the earliest Vedic period. They describe the genealogies of the different dynasties that ruled over different parts of India, narrating various myths and legends about the kings, mentioning only occasionally and incidentally their great achievements including their victories and conquests. The complete lists of kings are not given in one place, but have to be collected from different chapters dealing with different dynasties. The texts of the different Purāṇas, sometimes even of different manuscripts of the same Purāṇa, show material divergence, by way of additions, omissions or substitutions of names. Still, subject to correction of details, a general framework of political history has been drawn up by several scholars by collating the text of different Purāṇas.

The *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition* by F. E. Pargiter and the *Chronology of Ancient India* by S. N. Pradhan may be cited as two good examples of this type of work.

The different Purāṇas follow in this respect the same pattern. The genealogical list begins with the common ancestor, Manu Vaivasvata, and all the royal dynasties described in the Purāṇas are said to be descended from his children, one daughter and ten sons. The more important among these dynasties sprang from the daughter Ilā and the eldest son Ikṣvāku. The son of Ilā, Purūravas, was the founder of the lunar dynasty, and Ikṣvāku was the progenitor of the solar dynasty. From each of these sprang many other dynasties ruling over practically every region of Northern India ; they include almost all the imperial dynasties, and most of the kings known from other sources belonged to them. It may be said in a general way that the descendants of the other nine sons of Manu did not play any important role in history and their kingdoms disappeared after some time, being conquered by the kings of the solar or lunar dynasty. Pargiter has drawn up an almost complete list of these dynasties and kings by a critical analysis and collation of different texts, and the same task has been done with regard to some dynasties by other scholars. They have sketched an outline of the different ruling dynasties and prepared a list of kings belonging to them.

The defects in the Purāṇic lists are obvious and have been referred to above. The scope for difference of opinion in interpreting them and arranging the names in a definite order is very great, and this is underlined by wide divergences between the views of different scholars. Almost every scholar working in this field has found fault with his predecessors and pointed out defects in their views. In view of the kind of material available, this is by no means a very difficult task. The real difficulty lies not so much in criticising older theories, but suggesting new ones which are less objectionable. The one serious evil following from these rancorous disputes is that there are not a few who discard outright the entire genealogical scheme of the Purāṇas as absolutely worthless and resent even a brief reference to it in any modern history of ancient

India, even though these dynasties or kings are expressly referred to as belonging to traditional history.

The first question to discuss, therefore, is whether such an attitude is justified. A proper discussion of this question involves the examination of a few preliminary points.

In the first place, we have to inquire whether there are good grounds to believe that genealogies of dynasties ruling in remote antiquity—centuries before Gautama the Buddha with whom our history proper starts today—were actually drawn up and preserved. This question may be answered in the affirmative with a great deal of probability. Reference may be made to the Sūtas whose duty according to the *Vāyu Purāṇa* (I. 31-32) and the *Padma Purāṇa* (V. i. 27-28) was to preserve the genealogies of the gods, *ṛiṣis* and the most glorious kings and the traditions of great men. It is expressly stated that these Sūtas were concerned only with the *Itihāsa-Purāṇa* and had nothing to do with the Vedas, i.e. the study of religious literature. This specific direction certainly envisages a type of secular literature which sought to preserve the chronicles of kings and great men. That the genealogical lists found in the existing Purāṇa texts extend to a date long before the period when they were composed or put in the present form, admits of no doubt, and it may be easily imagined that the materials for the same were found in the genealogical lists prepared by the Sūtas and collected in some kind of historical text or texts. A clear tradition to this effect is preserved in the Purāṇas themselves. According to the *Vāyu, Brahmāṇḍa* and *Viṣṇu Purāṇas*, while Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana entrusted the four Vedas to four of his disciples, he taught a fifth disciple, the Sūta Romaharṣaṇa (Lomaharṣaṇa), the *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* consisting of tales, anecdotes, etc., that had come down from the ages. This tradition is indirectly borne out by the *Mahābhārata* which says that Vyāsa, just after he had composed it, declared that he had already made the *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇas* manifest. This tradition is fully supported also by the Vedic literature itself. The *Atharvaveda Saṁhitā* (XI. 7.24), for example, mentions the *Purāṇa* along with the *Ṛk*, the *Sāman* and the *Yajus*, and it can therefore only refer to a secular text bereft of all religious

or mythical topics which now form the bulk of the Purāṇa texts. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XI. 5.6.8) includes *Itihāsa-Purāṇa* (and the allied *Nārāśaṁsīs*) in a list of subjects of study which are described as 'honey-offerings to the gods', the daily study of which is applauded as productive of great merit both in this world and in the next. The *Chāndogyopaniṣad* (VII. 1. 4; VII. 2. 1) mentions *Itihāsa-Purāṇa* immediately after the four Vedas and refers to it as the fifth Veda. Similarly *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* are mentioned separately in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* (IV. 5.11) immediately after the four Vedas in a long list of studies which, we are told, were all breathed forth from the Great Being (Supreme Self). The *Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra* (III. 3.1) also mentions together the *Nārāśaṁsīs*, *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas*. It is interesting to note that *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* are sometimes mentioned as two distinct subjects or texts, and sometimes as one and the same. The word *Purāṇa* in the singular number may denote the original Purāṇa text out of which emanated the various Purāṇas at a later age. But this speculation is not very material to our present purpose which is to show that at least one Purāṇa text, which was often also regarded as *Itihāsa*, existed in the Vedic age.

In the fact of the specific mention of the *Purāṇa* or *Itihāsa-Purāṇa* in the Saṁhitā, Brāhmaṇa, Gṛhyasūtra and Upaniṣad, in the list of important branches of study, we cannot but admit the existence of one or more texts, if not a class of literature, dealing with the genealogies and chronicles of the kings from a remote antiquity even reaching the period of the Saṁhitās. This certainly indicates that the genealogical lists of kings found in the existing Purāṇas are not pure figments of imagination, but were evidently based on pre-existing texts, of which no trace has been found so far. This is indirectly proved by the fact that the existing Purāṇa texts, composed during the Gupta period or later, mention the names of kings like Prasenajit, Udayana and Bimbisāra who actually ruled at least 900 years before the date.

That the text or texts were faulty and imperfect at the time when the Purāṇas were written admits of no doubt; but there is equally little doubt that those who composed the present

Purāṇas had such texts at their disposal. Perhaps the incorporation of such texts in the Purāṇas accounts for their disappearance, for their separate existence was no longer deemed to be necessary or of any use, and the scholars of those days therefore did not take the trouble of saving them from destruction by copying them from time to time.

Secondly, the question arises as to whether we have any means of testing the general accuracy of these royal genealogies or lists of kings. The defects in the dynastic accounts as preserved in the Purāṇas are obvious and have often been pointed out. There are conflicting statements not only in different Purāṇas, but even in the same Purāṇa in different places. Sometimes one dynasty is merged into another or contains the names of kings belonging to another dynasty. Sometimes different kings of the same name are taken as identical. The genealogies often give the complete list or at least profess to do so; in some cases, it is explicitly said that only the chief and best known kings are mentioned. This perhaps explains the discrepancy in the number of kings of different dynasties though they all cover the same period, namely, from Manu to the Bhārata War, which is generally looked upon as the most serious defect in the Purāṇic genealogies. A close and critical study would reveal similar explanations of other apparent discrepancies, and it is certainly worth a serious attempt to find out whether a brief skeleton of the political history may be evolved in spite of all these deficiencies that stare us in the face. Different scholars who have done this claim to have achieved success, and though this claim may not be wholly upheld, there is no doubt that considerable progress has been made in removing the cobwebs that hitherto covered the Purāṇic texts.

The most successful attempts in this direction have been made by the two scholars I have named above, and future workers must have to seriously consider the solutions they have proposed. But there are incidental treatments of the problems concerning these genealogies which also should be carefully examined. On the whole, it appears to me that there is enough scope for a patient and critical study of the texts in the light of

other literature, and any light thrown on even isolated points may help us a great deal.

By way of illustration, I may refer to a few points of agreement between the Purāṇic genealogical lists and the Vedic texts which have so far been accepted as the only sure basis of our knowledge of the history of the early Aryans. Now the one thing on which, on the basis of these Vedic texts, there is a general agreement among Indologists, is the advent of the Aryans into India from the north-west and their gradual expansion from the Punjab towards the east along the banks of the Ganges and the Jamuna. At first the statements of the Purāṇas seem to go definitely against this view, for they locate the kingdom of Ikṣvāku, the eldest son of Manu Vaivasbata, about Ayodhyā, and that of the sons of Ilā about Pratiṣṭhāna, i.e., Allahabad. But this mistake seems to be due merely to the fact that, at a much later date with which the authors of the modern texts of the Purāṇas were familiar, the chief royal dynasties descended from them actually lived in these regions. Such modernization is a very common and natural error (reference may be made to the location of the Sena kings at Delhi in the *Rājāvalī* composed early in the 19th century A.D.) and if we once assume this to be the cause of the Purāṇic statements, it is possible to find evidence in these texts that the rule of the early kings of the dynasties was confined to the Punjab. This may be illustrated by a few sporadic statements.

Thus king Yayāti is associated in the *Mahābhārata* with the Sarasvatī river, and, as Pūru, his younger son, is said to have continued the main line, Pūru and his descendants should be regarded as having lived there. All the other sons of Yayāti, except one, are placed to the north or west of the main kingdom. These sons are named Yadu, Turvasu, Anu and Druhyu, and the peoples known by these names are mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*. The location of the Yadus in the west is supported by the statement in the *Ṛgveda* that the Yadus made a raid on the bank of the Sarayu, a river which is mentioned along with the Kubhā, Krumu and Sindhu, but never associated with the Gaṅgā, Yamunā or any other eastern river. The Haihayas, a branch of the Yadus, are said to have invaded the kingdom of the Ikṣvākus in alliance

with various tribes such as the Śakas, Pahlavas, Pāradas, Kambojas, etc., who all belonged to the western part of N. India. According to the *Mahābhārata*, the Yādava princess, Lopāmudrā, married Agastya at a *tīrtha* on the Indus. These and other statements indicate that the early Aryan kings mentioned in the Purāṇas ruled in the Punjab. A further argument is furnished by two later kings, Jahnu and Bhagīratha, from whose names were undoubtedly derived the two appellations, Jāhnavī and Bhāgīrathī, of the Ganges. It may be plausibly argued that they were the first kings to rule over the Upper and Lower Ganges Valleys, and this shows the gradual progress of the Aryans towards the east from their north-western home, long after Manu Vaivasvata.

Similarly the name of Nābhānediṣṭha, one of the sons of Manu Vaivasvata, is found in the *Ṛgveda* where he is said to be the son of Manu Sāvarṇi, a *grāmaṇī*. This Manu Sāvarṇi composed a hymn of the *Ṛgveda* with Nahuṣa and Yayāti. The Ṛgvedic hymn of Nābhānediṣṭha mentions Yadu and Turvasu, sons of Yayāti. Thus all these seem to indicate the real existence of Nābhānediṣṭha and the others in the north-west—for the Ṛgvedic hymns were composed in this region—though he has been wrongly described as the son of Manu Vaivasvata, because his father was also Manu (Sāvarṇi).

Ilā, the daughter of Manu Vaivasvata, married Budha, and their son, Purūravas, is described in the Purāṇas as the founder of the lunar dynasty. Now, *ṛiṣi* Budha is mentioned as the son of Soma in the *Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa* and hence the dynasty founded by Purūravas was truly called Soma-vaṁśa. But the Purāṇas took Soma to mean the Moon and hence called the dynasty the lunar dynasty. All this shows that there was a substratum of facts in the statements of the Purāṇas, though chroniclers often distored them at a later date due to ignorance and a tendency to fanciful or mythical explanations.

The proper attitude towards the *Rājavaṁśa-varṇana* of the Purāṇas should, therefore, be not to ignore its value and discard it as altogether useless, but to make a patient, critical study of the Purāṇa texts along with the other evidences available to

us—particularly the old Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain literature—and deduce the historical data lying hidden therein, so that it may be possible in future to reconstitute the outline of the political history of India from the Vedic period onwards with a tolerable degree of certainty.

II

Nature of the Purāṇic Genealogies

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There is a good deal of discrepancy in the Purāṇic accounts of well-known royal families of the historical period. A typical illustration is offered by the Purāṇic genealogy and chronology of the Śātavāhanas,[1] called Andhra in most of the Purāṇas, but Andhrabhṛtya (servants of the Andhras) in a few cases.

The *Vāyu*, *Brahmāṇḍa*, *Viṣṇu* and *Bhāgavata Purāṇas* say that there were 30 Andhra kings, but never quote so many names. The *Vāyu* mentions only 17, 18, 19 or 25 names and the *Viṣṇu* only 22, 23 or 24, while the *Brahmāṇḍa* and *Bhāgavata* give respectively 17 and 23 names. On the other hand, the *Matsya Purāṇa* says that there were 19 Andhra kings, but quotes the names of 30 rulers.[2]

There is also discrepancy in the length of the individual reigns quoted in the Purāṇas. Taking the longer or longest period wherever there is any difference, we get 471½ years for all the Andhra kings. While the *Vāyu* and *Brahmāṇḍa* have two passages, one giving the duration of Andhra rule as 300 years and the other a little above 400 years, one *Matsya* manuscript quotes 412 years, though most manuscripts of this Purāṇa quote 460 years as the duration. The *Viṣṇu* and *Bhāgavata*

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1 *Śātavāhana* and *Śātakarṇi* are also written *Sātavāhana* and *Sātakarṇi*. But the names appear essentially to be petronymics meaning 'the son of *Śatavāhana* (one having hundred vehicles)' and 'the son of *Śatakarṇa* (one having hundred ears, i.e. capable of receiving several reporters at a time)' respectively.

2 Rapson, *Catalogue of Coins*, pp. lxvi-lxvii; Pargiter, *The Purāṇa Text*, pp. 38-43.

Purāṇas and one manuscript of the *Brahmāṇḍa* give 456 years in stead.[3]

Again, according to the practically unanimous testimony of the Purāṇas, Simuka (whose name is wrongly spelt in all the Purāṇic manuscripts) established Andhra suzerainty, after having overthrown the last Kāṇva king Suśarman 294 years (137 years of Maurya rule + 112 years of Śuṅga rule + 45 years of Kāṇva rule) after Candragupta Maurya had extirpated the Nanda dynasty or after Alexander's departure from India in 324 B.C. as can be gathered from the writing of the European authors, that is to say, in or shortly after 324—294=30 B.C. We also know that the Andhras (Śātavāhanas) could not have ruled as an imperial power after the foundation of the Ikṣvāku and Vākāṭaka kingdoms, respectively in the northern and southern areas of the Śātavāhana empire, in the third century A.D. The length of Andhra rule usually quoted as more than 400 years is thus palpably wrong.

All this discrepancy clearly suggests that the genealogical and chronological traditions of the Purāṇas are unreliable. Moreover, numismatic evidence has offered us the names of certain Andhra or Śātavāhana kings (e.g. Kumbha Śātakarṇi, Rudra Śātakarṇi, and Kṛṣṇa Śātakarṇi)[4] not known from any of the Purāṇas.

Two other unsatisfactory features of the Purāṇic traditions may also be noticed here. In the first place, we may refer to the incredibly long reign period assigned to rulers like Mahāpadma Nanda (88 years) and the Vākāṭaka king Vindhyaśakti I (96 years).[5] It is sometimes suggested, on the basis of the reading *aṣṭāviṁśati* (for *aṣṭāśīti*) in some manuscripts only of the *Vāyu Purāṇa*, that Mahāpadma ruled for 28 years and that the duration of his life time was 88 years. But this is certainly un-

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3 Pargiter, *op. cit.*, pp. 43, 46.

4 Kumbha's coins have been discovered in the Tarhala hoard (*JNSI*, Vol. II, pp. 83 ff.), Rudra Śātakarṇi and Kṛṣṇa Śātakarṇi (whose name has been read as *Karṇa Śātakarṇi* on some Tarhala coins) are known from the coins described in Rapson's *Catalogue of Coins*.

5 Pargiter, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

warranted, because another tradition common to the *Matsya*, *Vāyu* and *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇas* states that the nine Nandas ruled for 100 years, i.e. Mahāpadma for 88 years and his 8 sons for 12 years.[6]

Secondly, some of the Purāṇic traditions are clearly anachronical. Thus Bāhu and Sagara, who were distant ancestors of Daśaratha of the Ikṣvāku dynasty of Ayodhyā, are stated in a story found in the *Harivaṁśa* and a large number of the Purāṇas to have fought with the Yavanas, Śakas, Pahlavas, etc., who, as we know, came to India more than a millennium after the supposed date of the said monarchs of Indian mythology.[7]

In any case, if the above is the unsatisfactory position in respect of the Andhras (Śātavāhanas) who flourished only a century before the compilation of the historical section of the Purāṇas in the first half of the fourth century A. D., a similar or worse confusion must be expected in the case of the dynasties whose beginning is ascribed to the hoariest antiquity.

As regards the solar line of Kosala, the discrepancy between the evidence of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and that of the Purāṇas is well known,, and the two cannot be reconciled. Thus the *Rāmāyaṇa* gives only 35 names of Ikṣvāku rulers down to Rāma 'whereas the Purāṇas enumerate 63 names for the same period, and, likewise, the former makes Raghu the father of Kalmāṣapāda and places Aja 12 generations below Raghu, although the latter make Aja the son of Raghu.[8] It is therefore imposible to compile a reliable genealogy of the Ikṣvākus on the basis of such conflicting sources, and it is no wonder that similar discrepancy is noticed in the works of modern writers on the genealogy of the solar line. Thus we find 96 names from Manu to Bṛhadbala in the genealogy quoted by Pargiter,[9] while V. Pathak quotes only 76 names in his recently published work.[10] After Bṛhadbala, the Purāṇas

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6 *Ibid.*, p. 26.
7 *JAS*, 4th Series, Vol. IV, No. 2, 1962, pp. 49ff.
8 See Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, pp. 91-92.
9 *Ibid.*, pp. 144 ff.
10 *History of Kosala*, pp. 84 ff.

mention 30 names upto Sumitra so as to make 96+30 = 126 names,[11] though in Pathak's list Sumitra's is the 102nd name. Now, in this part of the Ikṣvāku dynasty, the Purāṇas include the following names in succession—Sañjaya, his son Śākya, his successor Śuddhodana, his son Siddhārtha, his son Rāhula, his successor Prasenajit, his successor Kṣudraka, his successor Kulaka, his successor Suratha and his son Sumitra, the last king of Ayodhyā. That the mention of Śākya, Śuddhodana, Siddhārtha (i.e. Gautama the Buddha) and Rāhula as kings is due to confusion is clear from Buddhist evidence which makes king Prasenajit of Kosala a contemporary of the Buddha and assigns the latter's *parinirvāṇa* to the first quarter of the fifth century B.C.[12] It should also be noted that Buddhist literature mentions Mahākośala and Virūḍhava respectively as the father (predecessor) and son (successor) of Prasenajit and that these names are not found in the Purāṇic genealogy.

According to a Purāṇic tradition, the current *Manvantara* is that of Vaivasvata Manu, of which the Kṛta or Satya (1,728,000 years), Tretā (1,296,000 years) and Dvāpara (864,000 years) Yugas as well as a portion, of the Kali-yuga have already elapsed. If therefore Vaivasvata Manu flourished 3,888,000 years before the beginning of the Kali age, he cannot possibly be regarded as about one hundred generations in ascent from Prasenajit (c. 500 B.C.). Thus either the chronological or the genealogical tradition has to be regarded as wrong. Since no human civilization had developed anywhere on the earth about a lakh of years ago, the tradition assigning Vaivasvata Manu to the 3,889th millennium B. C. is of course a ludicrous absurdity.

The Purāṇic traditions may be compared with the untrustworthy legends of Greek and Jewish origins, which are regarded as full of 'misinterpretations and mistakes'[13] as well as with the genealogies found in the earlier books of Kalhaṇa's *Rāja-*

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11 Pargiter, *The Purāṇa Text*, pp. 66-67.

12 Raychaudhuri, *PHAI*, 1950, pp. 102-03, 214.

13 Hall, *Ancient History of the Near East*, 7th ed., pp. 2-3.

taraṅgiṇī, in chronicles like the Oriya *Mādalāpāñjī* and the Bengali *Rājamālā*, in the *praśastis* noticed in the early medieval epigraphic records of India, etc., etc.

As regards the first few books of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, Stein observes, "It seeems probable that those portions of Kalhaṇa's chronicles which are most open to critical objection owe their want of historical value largely to the unsatisfactory character of the earlier works. Kalhaṇa's account of the period preceding the 6th century of our era furnishes us on the whole only with bare dynastic lists and with traditions often of a very legendary nature concerning certain individual kings. But . . . . these scanty records of doubtful values were all that he found in his sources . . . . . It is only too evident that each narrator omitted more and more of authentic but to him uninteresting data, while legendary incidents and popular anecdotes on the other hand received an increasingly large share of attention."[14] But the evidence of the temple chronicles shows that the earliest section of the accounts was based on imagination influencing oral tradition of no value at all. Indeed it requires greater credulity than those, who are inclined to distinguish legend and mythology from history, possess to accept as historical what the Purāṇas say about Manu (the founder of the Ikṣvāku and other houses) and his successors or what the Kashmir chronicle narrates about the earlier rulers of the land one of whom is represented as a contemporary of the Pāṇḍava king Yudhiṣṭhira (assigned to 2449 B.C.) and another credited with an absurd reign period of 300 years.[15] The Oriya *Mādalāpāñjī*, which is of the nature

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14 *Kalhaṇa's Rājataraṅgiṇi*, Vol. I, pp. 28-29.

15 *Ibid.*, I. 56ff.; III. 470. Kalhaṇa's attitude to such absurdities is clear from III. 94-95 which support his description of the miraculous activities of king Maghavāhana in the following words: "We feel embarrassed indeed in thus recording these and other acts of this king of recent times, which cannot be believed by the common people. However, authors who follow the path of the ancient sages are of course not dominated by subservience to the hearer's notions on their compositions."

of the temple chronicles of South India,[16] must have depended on legends current about the sixteenth century A.D. among the priests of the Jagannātha temple at Purī, supplemented largely by their own imagination, regarding three royal families that ruled over the Purī region in the near, distant and remote past, viz. (1) the Sūryavaṁśī Gajapatis (c. 1435-1541 A.D.), (2) the Gaṅgas (i.e. the later Eastern Gaṅgas, c. 1110-1435 A.D.), and (3) the Kesarins (i.e. the later Somavaṁśīs, c. 1025-1210 A.D.). Consequently, the tradition about these three dynasties is partially reliable in the first case, mostly unreliable in the second and absolutely worthless in the third.[17] Of the 46 rulers of the Kesarin dynasty assigned to the period between the sixth and the twelfth century A.D., the name of the dynasty and the duration of its rule being both totally wrong, the names of only three may be somehow traced in the Later Somavaṁśī genealogy. The absence of any reference to the rulers of the Bhauma-Kara and earlier dynasties (e.g., Gupta, Vigraha, Māna, Gauḍa and Śailodbhava) shows that the compilers of the *Mādalāpāñji* were absolutely ignorant about the genuine events of the history of Orissa before the tenth century A.D. Faced with these circumstances, who can say that the earlier names in the Purāṇic genealogies are not as fictitious as the imaginary Kesarin kings of the *Mādalāpāñji*? It may also be noticed that the earliest and most dubious names in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* (i.e. Gonanda I and his successors) were accepted by Kalhaṇa on the authority of a Purāṇa called *Nīlamata*. Who can be sure that our Purāṇas are better in respect of the earliest names in the genealogies than the *Nīlamata Purāṇa* ascribed to a sage named Nīlamuni? In this connection, reference may be made to the imaginary genealogy of the kings of Tripurā as given in the Bengali chronicle called *Rājamālā* which gives us to understand that the Mongoloid Ṭiprā rulers were direct descendants of the Pāṇḍava heroes of the lunar race.

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16 Cf. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India*, p. 21.

17 See *IH*, Vol. XXXI, 1953, pp. 233f.; *JAS*, *op. cit.*, No. 1, p. 9.

Instances of fabricated genealogy are also found in numerous epigraphic records. It is well known that the epigraphs of the Cālukyas of Badami represent Vikramāditya I (655-81 A.D.) as the son of Pulakeśin II (610-41 A.D.), although their genealogy fabricated less than three centuries afterwards by the Later Cālukyas tells us that Pulakeśin II was succeeded regularly by his son Neḍamari, grandson Ādityavarman and great-grandson Vikramāditya I.[18] In the records of the Eastern Gaṅga monarch Vajrahasta III (1038-70 A.D.), his predecessors are mentioned as : (1) Guṇamahārṇava (i.e. Guṇārṇava), (2) his son Vajrahasta I (44 years), (3) his son Guṇḍama (3 years), (4) his brother Kāmārṇava (35 years), (5) his brother Vinayāditya (3 years), (6) Kāmārṇava's son Vajrahasta II Aniyaṅkabhīma (35 years), (7) his son Kāmārṇava (½ year), (8) his brother Guṇḍama (3 years), (9) his step-brother Madhukāmārṇava (19 years), (10) Kāmārṇava's son Vajrahasta III (1038-70 A.D.).[19] The same genealogy is quoted even in the earlier records of Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga (1078-1147 A.D.).[20] But, in the later epigraphs of Coḍagaṅga, we find the genealogy as follows : from Ananta (Viṣṇu), through the Moon, to Gāṅgeya ; from Gāṅgeya to Kolāhala, founder of Kolāhalapura in Gaṅgavāḍi ; his son Virocana ; then after 81 kings of Kolāhalapura, Vīrasiṁha ; his five sons Kāmārṇava I, Dānārṇava I, Mārasiṁha and Vajrahasta I ; of these (1) Kāmārṇava defeated Balāditya, conquered Kaliṅga and ruled at Jantāvūra for 36 years ; (2) his brother Dānārṇava (40 years) ; (3) his son Kāmārṇava II (reigned at Nagara for 50 years) ; (4) his son Raṇārṇava (5 years) ; (5) his son Vajarahasta II (15 years) ; (6) his brother Kāmārṇava III (19 years) ; (7) his son Guṇārṇava II (27 years) ; (8) his son Jitāṅkuśa (15 years) ; (9) his brother's son Kaligaḷāṅkuśa (12 years) ; (10) his uncle Guṇḍama I (7 years) ; (11) his brother Kāmārṇava IV (25 years) ; (12) his brother Vinayāditya (3 years) ; (13) Vajrahasta IV (35 years), son of

18 See *The Classical Age*, ed. Majumdar, p. 242.

19 Bhandarkar's *List of Inscriptions*, No. 1091.

20 *Ibid.*, No. 1100.

Kāmārṇava IV; (14) his son Kāmārṇava V (½ year); (15) his brother Guṇḍama II (3 years); (16) his step-brother Madhukāmārṇava (19 years); and (17) his son Vajrahasta V (1038-70 A.D.).[21] Leaving aside the mythical figures, we find that a host of apparently imaginary personages (such as Kolāhala of Mysore and his descendants some of whom migrated to Orissa) have been introduced in the modified genealogy between Turvasu and Guṇārṇava II (No. 7) who is the progenitor of the family in the earlier account, but is represented here as Guṇārṇava II. It will be seen that the two accounts tally with each other from Vajrahasta (called Vajrahasta IV in the later account), grandfather of the great Vajrahasta III (1038-70 A.D.) called Vajrahasta V in the later account. It is not possible to believe that Vajrahasta III made mistakes in recounting the names of his immediate predecessors and that his grandson Coḍagaṅga had more reliable information about them. We have to notice that even the name of the father of Vajrahasta III has been wrongly quoted in the later records of his grandson. There can therefore be no doubt that whatever is new in the later genealogy and is in conflict with the earlier account is imaginary and unreliable. It seems that Vajrahasta II Aniyaṅkabhīma (c. 982-1016 A.D.) was the founder of the family's greatness and that there was little authentic information about his predecessors upto Guṇārṇava, progenitor of the family, at the disposal of the court poets of Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga. The genealogy from the god Viṣṇu to this Guṇārṇava seems to be entirely fabricated, the fabrication depending on several factors,[22] the foremost amongst them being the eagerness of the medieval ruling families to trace their descent from a respectable source like the solar, lunar, Yādava or Nāga lineage. The palpably unreliable nature of the mythical genealogy of the Cālukyas

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21 *Ibid.*, No. 1103. Nagara is probably the same as Kaliṅganagara.

22 We discussed the question in fuller detail in *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 239-41.

of Veṅgī and Kalyāṇa is quite well known to the student of Indian history.[23]

In an attempt to determine the date of the Bhārata War, Pargiter suggests an average of 18 years for a generation of the Purāṇic kings. But it is not possible to be sure about such averages. Thus the 17 kings of the Imperial Eastern Gaṅga dynasty from Vajrahasta III (who ascended the throne in 1038 A.D.) to Bhānu IV (who was ousted by Kapilendra in 1435 A.D.) ruled for 397 years, *i.e.* a little over 23 years in average, while, on the other hand, Chapters V-VIII of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, which are regarded by scholars as quite satisfactory as a historical account, would give 34 rulers (from the accession of Avantivarman in 855 A.D. to the end of Jayasiṁha's rule in 1155 A.D.)[24] reigning for a total of 300 years, i.e. an average of a little less than 9 years. And, if the two groups are amalgamated, 17+34=51 rulers would be found to have ruled for 397+300=697 years, i.e. an average of about 13½ years. The difficulty is that, when more than a hundred generations are involved, even the difference of one year would create a discrepancy of more than a century. But suppose we accept Pargiter's average of 18 years, then the more than hundred generations of the Ikṣvākus before Prasenajit (c. 500 B.C.) would cover a period above 1800 years, so that Manu must have flourished earlier than 2300 B.C. Even on an everage of 10 years, the founder of the Ikṣvāku house has to be placed earlier than 1500 B.C. The question now is how to reconcile this chronology with the widely accepted

23. *The Classical Age*, ed. Majumdar, pp. 229-31. In the mythical part of the genealogy of the Eastern Cālukyas of Veṅgī, Parīkṣit is represented as sixth in ascent from Udayana (contemporary of the Buddha, 566-486 B.C.) so that he was supposed to have flourished after 700 B.C. Cf. Sircar, *The Guhilas of Kiṣkindhā*, p. 13. This chronology seems to be absurd, another absurdity being the representation of Udayana and other members of his family as kings of Ayodhyā.

24 The date of Jayasiṁha's death is really learnt from a later chronicle. Kalhaṇa's work was completed five years earlier about 1150 A.D.

views regarding the existence of the protohistoric Harappa or Indus Valley civilization in the third and second millennia B.C. and the advent of the Aryans about the middle of the second millennium B.C. Are Manu and his descendants to be regarded as Aryans or Pre-Aryans? As the Purāṇas appear to represent them as Aryans, we have probably to regard them as mythical figures if we accept the theory of Aryan advent about the middle of the second millennium B.C.

It may be noticed that the Nonaryan association of some of the clans is quite pronounced. Thus the story of Yayāti of the lunar race suggests that his favourite son Pūru, the progenitor of the Pauravas, was born of a Nonaryan princess, while his other sons (Yadu, Turvasu, Druhyu and Anu) whom he had cursed, became the progenitors of the despised Yādavas, Yavanas, Bhojas and Mlecchas respectively, the fourth category being sometimes possibly called Ānava-Kṣatriya. In this connection, we should also note the dark complexion of the Yādava hero Kṛṣṇa and the well-known fact that Kṛṣṇa himself and some members of his family married Nonaryan girls. What is more important seems to be that Pūru, Yadu, Turvaśa, Druhyu and Anu are mentioned in the early Vedic literature as separate clans which are thus made kinsmen of one another in the Yayāti story exactly as the progenitors of the Aṅgas, Vaṅgas, Kaliṅgas, Puṇḍras and Suhmas are made sons of the same father in the Purāṇic story of Dīrghatamas.

III

The Post-Āndhra Dynasties in the Purāṇas

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The end of the rule of the Āndhra dynasty is an important landmark in the traditional accounts of ruling families contained in the Purāṇas. Immediately after the Āndhras, the Purāṇas mention a number of local dynasties. The object of this paper is to identify such of these dynasties as appear to have been connected with the Imperial Āndhras and Āndhra-deśa.

According to Pargiter, the accounts of the Purāṇas relating to these local dynasties consist of three parts—(1) enumeration of the number of kings in each dynasty, (2) mention of the duration of each dynasty and (3) addition of some subsequent kings. Pargiter states that these dynasties are all classed together as more or less contemporaneous.[1]

In the collated version of Pargiter, the first four lines based upon the *Matsya-Vāyu-Brahmāṇḍa* version read—

Āndhrāṇāṁ saṁsthite rājye
teṣāṁ bhṛty-ānvayā nṛpāḥ |
sapt=aiv=Āndhrā bhaviṣyanti
daś=Ābhīrās=tathā nṛpāḥ ||

These lines are followed by the mention of 6 Gardabhins, 18 Śakas, etc., in six more lines. If the first line is taken as a preface to the nine subsequent lines, it means that all the kings mentioned in them were contemporaries of the Āndhras and, together with the second line, it means further that all these kings belonged to families of Āndhrabhṛtyas or servants of the Āndhras. Both these meanings are untenable. The word

1 *Purāṇa Text of the Dynasties of the Kali Age*, p. 54.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 72.

saṁsthite does not mean "when the kingdom of the Āndhras has come to an end" as mentioned by Pargiter.[2] The word means "well established" and implies that all the kings mentioned thereafter ruled even while the Āndhras were well established or even while they were ruling. This contemporaneity is not correct. Nor is it true that all the kings were of families which were servants of the Āndhras. There is no evidence to bear this out. For these reasons, the first three lines of the collated *Matsya-Vāyu-Brahmāṇḍa* version must be taken as one unit and as referring to a family or families which were formerly Āndhra subordinates and as one of the other contemporary families mentioned in lines 1-10.

It is necessary to examine the first three lines of the collated *Matsya-Vāyu-Brahmāṇḍa* version. As pointed out already, *saṁsthite rājye* in line 1 implying the contemporaneity of the Āndhras and others has to be discarded. The *Matsya* versions other than those of MSS *c d f g k n* and the *Vāyu* and *Brahmāṇḍa* give the alternative reading as *saṁsthitāḥ* for *saṁsthite* and *pañca* for *rājye*.[4] These alternative readings imply that "five families of the Āndhras were well established". For the expression *bhṛty-ānvayāḥ nṛpāḥ* in the second line, the *Brahmāṇḍa* gives the alternative reading *vaṁśyāś=ca ye*.[5] These two alternative readings for lines 1 and 2 imply *teṣām=Āndhrāṇāṁ vaṁśyāḥ ca ye nṛpāḥ* [*te*] [*bhaviṣyanti*], meaning "there will be five kings who belong to the family of those Āndhras". But the third line, which means "there will be seven Āndhras", vitiates this interpretation, for there cannot be both five kings and seven kings at the same time and of the same stock. Hence, a further modification is necessary. This difficulty can be got over by reconstructing the three lines as *teṣām=Āndhrāṇāṁ ca vaṁśyā nṛpāḥ* [*te*] *sapt=aiv=Āndhrā bhaviṣyanti*, meaning "there will be seven Āndhra kings who are of the family of these Āndhras". The mention of seven Āndhra kings will be in tune with the mention of the kings of the other families in the

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3 *Ibid.*, p. 45.
4 *Ibid.*, note 2, last line.
5 *Ibid.*, note 3, last line.

subsequent lines.[6] The only additional information available is that these seven kings are of the Āndhra family and this mention must have had some peculiar significance.

Then there is the alternative reading of the collated version based upon the *Bhāgavata* and *Viṣṇu*, which is an obvious substitute for the three lines discussed above. This alternative line mentions *sapt-Ābhīr-Āndhrabhṛtyāḥ* or seven Abhīras and Āndhrabhṛtyas. The total number of the kings of the two families cannot be seven and so this reading is obviously absurd. As the third line of the other versions mentions ten Ābhīras and seven Āndhras, this alternative line must be corrected as *Ābhīrāḥ sapt=Āndhrabhṛtyāḥ*, meaning "the Ābhīras and seven Āndhrabhṛtyas". The *Viṣṇu* independently gives the reading *Āndhrabhṛtyāḥ sapt=Ābhūrāḥ*,[7] but the word *sapta* must be tagged on to the word *Āndhrabhṛtyāḥ* in which case it means "seven Āndhabhṛtyas and Ābhīras". This rearrangement is supported by the occurrence of the isolated word *daśa* at the beginning of the second line of the collated *Bhāgavata-Viṣṇu* version.[8] We then have *Āndhrabhṛtyāḥ sapta* and *Ābhīrā daśa*. This is in perfect accord with the collated *Matsya-Vāyu-Brahmāṇḍa* version.

The above arrangement, however, raises the question—are the seven Āndhras of the collated *Matsya-Vāyu-Brahmāṇḍa* version identical with the seven Āndhras of the collated *Bhāgavata-Viṣṇu* version? But the seven Āndhras are said to be of the Āndhra family according to one version and of the family of Āndhra servants according to another version.

The second part of the account of these local dynasties which mentions the duration of the rule of each of the families mentioned in the first part introduces a complication. The first two lines of the *Matsya* alone read—

Āndhrāḥ Śrīparvatīyāś=ca te dvi-pañcāśataṁ samāḥ.

In addition to the seven Āndhras mentioned in the first part, the name *Śrīparvatīyāḥ* occurs in this part. These Śrīparvatīyas

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6 Lines 4-10.

7 *Ibid.*, note 5, last line.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 46, note 33, line 2.

do not figure along with the other rulers. The collated version of the *Vāyu-Brahmāṇḍa* in the second part mentions only the Āndhras. Thus, the Śrīparvatīyas are an additional family introduced in this part. The *b* copy of the *Matsya* calls the Śrīparvatīyas merely the Parvatīyas, while the *c d f g k m n* texts omit *Śrī*.[9]

One question that arises at this juncture is—what is the position of the Parvatīyas or Śrīparvatīyas in relation to the seven Āndhras and Āndhrabhṛtyas? *Āndhrāḥ* being common to one collated version in both parts, the Śrīparvatīyas seem to correspond to the Āndhrabhṛtyas of the alternative collated version of the first part, in which case the Āndhras and the Āndhrabhṛtya-Śrīparvatīyas have to be taken as two different families. The mention of the actual regnal periods further complicates the issue. The second line of the *Matsya* version says *te dvi-pañcāśataṁ samāḥ* or "they [rule] for 52 years". The alternative collated *Vāyu-Brahmāṇḍa* version states *Āndhrā bhokṣyanti vasudhāṁ śate dve ca śataṁ ca vai*, meaning "the Āndhras will enjoy the earth for 102* or 200 and 100 years". These two durations for a single family are absurd. They must obviously belong to two families. The second line of the *Matsya* version may be taken to mean "they [for] 50 years" or "the Āndhras and Śrīparvatīyas will rule for 50 and 50 years each". In view of this, the second line of the collated *Vayu-Brahmāṇḍa* version and the second line of the Matsya version may be reconstructed so as to mean "the Āndhras and the Śrīparvatīyas, they both rule for 102* and 100 years [respectively] or 2×50=100 years each." The *c e f g m n* texts of the *Matsya* give the reading *te dve pañca śataṁ*.[10] The *d* copy of the *Matsya* mentions *dve pañca ca śataṁ*[11] meaning "they rule for 105 years".* Pargiter suggests *daśa dve* instead of *sate dve* in line 2 of the collated *Vāyu-Brahmāṇḍa* version.[12] In many copies of the *Matsya*, *śate* is given as the alternative reading for *śataṁ*.

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*[This is a wrong interpretation.—Ed.].

9 *Ibid.*, notes 29 and 30.

10 *Ibid.*, note 32.

11 *Ibid.*, line 2.

12 *Ibid.*, note 33, last line.

In view of what has been stated above, it is clear that there were two families—the Āndhras and the Śrīparvatīyas. If so, who would be the Āndhrabhṛtyas? Two well-known families flourished in the post-Sātavāhana period, viz., the Cuṭu-Sātakarṇis and the Ikṣvākus of Vijayapurī. Of these, the Cuṭus assumed the title Sātakarṇi, the name of some and the title of other rulers of the imperial Āndhra dynasty. This shows that they belonged to the Āndhra stock. No doubt they described themselves as belonging to the Cuṭu-kula.[13] The Sātavāhana kings, Kṛṣṇa and Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi, are known to have belonged to the Sātavāhana-kula.[14] But the mention of two different *kulas* or families need not constitute an objection. The Purāṇas describe the Āndhras as a *jāti* or tribe and Simuka of the Sātavāhana family as belonging to this *jāti* and as having obtained the earth along with *sajātīyas* or co-tribesmen.[15] Thus it is quite possible that the Sātavāhanas and the Cuṭus were two families of the Āndhra tribe. The Cuṭu-Sātakarṇis must therefore be taken to be identical with the Āndhras mentioned by the Purāṇas in the section describing various local dynasties.

Śrīparvata is the name of a hill situated in the Nāgārjuna-koṇḍa valley near Vijayapurī, the capital of the Ikṣvākus.[16] Inscriptions show that the Ikṣvākus ruled over Āndhradeśa for some time immediately after the fall of the imperial Āndhra-Sātavāhanas. The first, third and fourth members of the Ikṣvāku family were ardent devotees of Brāhmaṇism and Cāṁtamūla I, the first ruler, was the pioneer of the earliest known Brāmaṇical revivalist movement in South India.[17] These Ikṣvākus, who lived near the Śrīparvata and who were great benefactors of Brāhmaṇism were therefore specially mentioned by the Purāṇic writers. For these reasons, the Śrīparvatīyas of the *Matsya* must be identified with the Ikṣvākus of Vijayapurī.

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13 Rapson, *Catalogue*, intro., pp. xxii-xxiii. [But cf. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXV, p. 72.—Ed.]

14 *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VIII, Nasik inscription.

15 Cf. *Śiśuk-Āndhras=sa-jātīyaḥ* and *Śiśuko hy=Andhra-jātīyaḥ*.

16 *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XX, Nagarjunakonda inscription F.

17 Cf. his performance of the *aśvamedha, agniṣṭoma* and *vājapeya* and his title *Svāmi-Mahāsena-pāda-parigṛhīta*. [Cf. *Sel. Ins.*, p. 231.—Ed.]

Then remains the name Āndhrabhṛtya. Since, as stated above, the Cuṭus were of the *Āndhrajāti*, and therefore Āndhras, they cannot be called Āndhrabhṛtya. The Ikṣvākus, on the other hand, do not bear any Āndhra titles. Tradition recorded in the Purāṇas associates them with Ayodhyā in the north, and they seem to have been migrants to the south. An inscription of the Āndhra-Sātavāhana king, Vijaya, was found in the Nāgārjunakoṇḍa valley near the Ikṣvāku capital, Vijayapurī.[18] The Ikṣvākus rose to power immediately after the Āndhra-Sātavāhanas and in the area which was formerly part of the Sātavāhana dominions. For these reasons, the Ikṣvākus must be identified with the Āndhrabhṛtyas mentioned above.

In view of what has been stated above, portions of the first and second parts of the section of the Purāṇas, relevant to the topic of this paper, may be reconstructed as follows—

Āndhrāṇāṁ saṁsthitā vaṁśyās=
teṣāṁ bhṛty-ānvayā nṛpāḥ |
sapt=aiv=Āndhrā bhaviṣyanti....
Āndhrāḥ Śrīparvatīyāś=ca
śataṁ dve ca śataṁ samāḥ ||

This passage would then mean—"There will be families of the Āndhras and families of their servants. There will be seven Āndhras. The Āndhras and Śrīparvatīyas will rule for 102 and 100 years [respectively]."

18 *Ancient India*, No. 16, pp. 84 ff.

IV

The Purāṇas and their Bearing on the Early Indian Dynasties

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The Purāṇas,[1] in some of their sections deal with the history of various royal families which are known to have exercised their sway over different parts of India from times immemorial. Chronologically speaking, the dynasties which find mention in the Purāṇic texts may be arranged into three groups—early, intermediate and later. The early group comprises the ruling houses which flourished upto the date of the Bhārata battle;[2] the intermediate dynasties arose and fell between the dates of the Bhārata battle and the foundation of the Maurya empire by Candragupta;[3] and the third, the later royal families, ruled upto the early fourth century A.D.

The early group is said to have included several royal families which are divided into two races, solar and lunar, but all descending from the mythical king Manu Vaivasvata. The

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1 According to the traditional definition, genealogies and deeds of kings and sages constitute two important topics of the Purāṇas (cf. *Sargaś=ca pratisargaś=ca vaṁśo manvantarāṇi ca | vaṁś-ānucaritaṁ c=aiva purāṇaṁ pañca-lakṣaṇam ||*). True to this tradition, most of the Purāṇas deal with these themes except the late *Varāha, Vāmana, Skanda, Nāradīya* and *Brahmavaivarta.*

2 The date of the Bhārata battle is a subject of controversy among scholars. Pargiter (*Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, p. 182) assigned it to c. 950 B.C., Jayaswal to c. 1424 B.C., Sen Gupta (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. IV, pp. 39 ff.) to c. 2449 B.C.; Altekar (*Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 3rd Session, 1939, pp. 68 ff.) to c. 1400 B.C. and Raychaudhuri (*Political History of Ancient India*, p. 36) to c. ninth century B.C.

3 Candragupta's accession to the throne is generally assigned to 324 B.C.; but according to Mookerji (*A Comprehensive History of India*, Vol. II, p. 5), the event occurred a year later.

broad outlines of some of the leading dynasties of this group may be sketched out as follows.

1. *The Aikṣvāku Dynasty of Ayodhyā.* The dynasty was founded by Vikukṣi Śaśāda who succeeded his father Ikṣvāku, son of Manu, on the throne of Ayodhyā in Madhyadeśa. Besides the Purāṇas, the genealogy of this royal house is recounted in the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* and Kālidāsa's *Raghuvaṁśa*, although striking divergences are noticeable in their accounts. If any credence is to be assigned to the Purāṇic genealogy, the dynasty must be supposed to have continued its existence for ninetyfive generations upto the Bhārata battle when Bṛhadbala of the family met his end at the hands of Abhimanyu. Among the outstanding monarchs of the family, mention may be made of Ikṣvāku, Māndhātṛ, Satyavrata Triśaṅku, Hariścandra, Sagara, Bhagīratha, Ambarīṣa, Kalmāṣapāda, Dilīpa II, Khaṭvāṅga, Raghu, Daśaratha and Rāma.

2. *The Videha Dynasty.* The dynasty, which was also designated as Maithila after the name of its second king Mithi, was founded by Ikṣvāku's son Nimi who was called Videha. The Purāṇas preserve for us a list of some 53 kings down to Kṛtakṣaṇa the last known king of the house.

3. *The Vaiśāla Dynasty.* The kings of the dynasty who were the descendants of Manu's son Nābhānediṣṭha are said to have been ruling over the region around modern Basarh till the time of Pramati who, as the *Rāmāyaṇa* testifies, was a contemporary of the Ikṣvāku monarch Daśaratha.

4. *The Śāryāta Dynasty.* The dynasty which owes its descent to Manu's son Śaryāti appears to have wielded suzerainty in Gujarat for a short period until it was overthrown by the Rākṣasa Puṇyajana.

5. *The Nābhāga Dynasty.* Descendants of Manu's son Nābhāga, the members of this family, who were five in number according to the Purāṇic testimony, reigned over a locality which cannot be identified.

All the aforesaid dynasties are referred to as having belonged to the solar race being quite distinct from the following ones which are said to be Aila or lunar in origin.

1. *The Kānyakubja Dynasty.* The kings of the dynasty

are represented as the scions of the family of Amāvasu, son of Purūravas, and only fifteen of them find mention in the Purāṇic texts. The dynasty is stated to have risen into prominence during the reigns of Jahnu, Gādhi and Viśvāmitra.

2. *The Kāśi Dynasty.* There are two contradictory versions for the origin of this line, one deriving it from Āyus' son Kṣatravṛddha and the other from Suhotra Paurava. During the reign of the Pāṇḍavas, the throne of Kāśī was under the occupation of Subāhu and Abhibhū, the latter succeeding the former.

3. *The Haihaya Dynasty.* The dynasty which was founded by Yadu's son Sahasrajit prospered in the region of South Malwa. With the passage of time, the Haihayas grew in power and comprised five leading groups, viz. Vītihotra, Śāryāta, Bhoja, Avanti and Tuṇḍikera, all of whom were called Tālajaṅgha.

4. *The Yādava Dynasty.* The dynasty which descended from Yadu's son Kroṣṭu held its sway over the country watered by the rivers Carmaṇvatī (Chambal), Vetravatī (Betwa) and Śuktimatī (Ken).

5. *The Turvasu Dynasty.* The kings of the dynasty were the descendants of Yayāti's son Turvasu and were ruling in the territory around Rewa. Marutta, the illustrious king of the family, had no son and adopted Duṣyanta the Paurava and thus this line seems to have merged into the Paurava dynasty.

6. *The Druhyu Dynasty.* The dynasty which sprang from Druhyu, son of Yayāti, had under its occupation the territory lying to the west of the Jamuna and north of the Chambal. At a subsequent period, the Druhyus retired to Gandhāra, i.e. the Peshawar and Rawalpindi Districts of West Pakistan.

7. *The Ānava Dynasty.* The dynasty originated from Yayāti's son Anu. In course of time, the Ānavas were divided into two branches, the Uśīnaras and the Titikṣus ruling over parts of the Punjab and East Bihar respectively.

8. *The Paurava Dynasty.* The dynasty, which is said to have sprung from Yayāti's son Pūru, was ruling in the middle region with its headquarters first at Pratiṣṭhāna[4] and later on at

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4 Pratiṣṭhāna has been identified with Pihan, a village in the neighbourhood of Allahabad (Jaya Chandra Vidyalankar, *Bhāratīya*

Hastināpura.[5] It acquired celebrity during the reigns of Duṣyanta, Bharata, Kuru, Pratīpa, Śāntanu, Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Yudhiṣṭhira. It was through the Pāṇḍavas that the main line of the Ailas continued its existence.

The question naturally arises as to how far the genealogies enumerated above may be regarded as trustworthy. Needless to say that scholars are divided in their opinion in regard to the validity of the historical data supplied by the Purāṇic texts. Keith was sceptical about the historicity of the Purāṇic accounts and the genuineness of any event not explicitly mentioned in the Vedic literature. On the other hand, scholars like F. E. Pargiter are inclined to regard the Purāṇic accounts as based on truth since they are sometimes corroborated by the testimony of other works.

The genealogy of the Ikṣvāku kings of Ayodhyā, is given, besides the Purāṇas, in other works like the *Rāmāyaṇa*. While the Purāṇas vouchafe for the existence of two Dilīpas, one the father of Bhagīratha and the other the father or grandfather of Raghu, the *Rāmāyaṇa* simply alludes to only one Dilīpa. That a Dilīpa was the father of Bhagīratha is testified to by the *Mahābhārata*, while the *Raghuvaṁśa* confirms the Purāṇas that 'Raghu was the son of Dilīpa who was necessarily a second Dilīpa'. Again while narrating the genealogy from Raghu onwards to Rāma, the Purāṇas mention four kings, viz. Raghu, Aja, Daśaratha and Rāma. The same version is followed in the *Raghuvaṁśa* whereas the *Rāmāyaṇa* gives an elaborate list of some 12 or 13 kings intervening between Raghu and Rāma. Further, the Purāṇas make Kākutstha the son of Śaśāda and the third king of the Ikṣvāku dynasty. This, however, is in contrast

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Itihāsкī Rūprekhā, Vol. I, pp. 128-29). This place was evidently quite different form Pratiṣṭhāna, i.e. modern Paithan, which was the capital of the Śātavāhanas.

5 The city, which lay along the Ganges (*anu-Gaṅgaṁ Hastināpuram*), is generally identified with a place near Meerut. It is not clear whether it is identical with Āsandīvat, mentioned in the Vedic texts as the royal residence of the Kurus.

to the evidence of the *Rāmāyaṇa* which refers to him as the son of Bhagīratha and grandson of Dilīpa. It is interesting to note that the *Mahābhārata* and *Raghuvaṁśa* corroborate the Purāṇas by stating that Dilīpa was a descendant of Kākutstha. 'It thus appears', to use the words of Pargiter,[6] 'that wherever it is possible to check the *Rāmāyaṇa* and Purāṇic lists of the Ayodhyā dynasty by other authorities, those authorities corroborate the Purāṇas and contradict the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Hence the *Rāmāyaṇa* genealogy must be put aside as erroneous, and the Purāṇic genealogy accepted'. 'If then the Purāṇic genealogy of Ayodhyā was held to be right, then', so continues Pargiter,[7] 'in spite of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, that is strong evidence that it is ancient and trustworthy. It is reasonable to conclude that equal care has been bestowed on the other dynasties, and there is a strong presumption that they had been equally well preserved during the preceding centuries, that is, that they are the original genealogies and therefore genuine.'

Although these are some of the cogent arguments which sought to prove the authenticity of the Purāṇic accounts, there are strong reasons for the belief that the aforesaid genealogies are incomplete and occasionally inaccurate, and a critical perusal reveals in them blemishes of various kinds of which a few are noted below.

Firstly, the Purāṇas represent the Yādavas, Pauravas and Aikṣvākus of Ayodhyā as contemporaneous dynasties, 'all starting from Manu and all ending with the Bhārata battle.' Yet while they furnish us with a list of some 93 Aikṣvāku kings for the period, they mention only 59 and 51 kings of the Yādava and Paurava families respectively. The three lists cannot, at the same time, be regarded to be authentic and, once we accept the former to be genuine, we must discard the other two as incomplete and erroneous. Secondly, sometimes a name is converted into an epithet or an epithet turned into a name.

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6 F. E. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, p. 93.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 121.

Dīrghabāhu and Raghu were two separate kings of the Ikṣvāku dynasty of Ayodhyā; yet in some of the Purāṇas Dīrghabāhu is treated as an epithet of Raghu. Similarly, Kausalya Hiraṇyanābha was a king of Kosala; but erroneously his epithet *Kausalya* is made a separate monarch, his son, in some of the Purāṇic texts. Thirdly, the Purāṇas allude to the invasion of Ayodhyā by the Haihayas in cooperation with the Śakas, Yavanas, Kāmbojas, Pāradas and Pahlavas from the north-west in the pre-Bhārata-war epoch; but the invasion of India by the Śakas, etc., at such an early date is contrary to our knowledge of Indian history. Fourthly, as will be discussed at some length afterwards, the genealogy of the various dynasties of the post-Bhārata-war epoch is full of many defects, viz., representation of contemporaries as successors, omission of certain individuals, use of family designations in the sense of names of rulers, etc. When the genealogy of the later rulers is found to be defective and erroneous, it is only natural to suppose that similar errors have crept into the enumeration of the early rulers of the dynasties given in the Purāṇas. Fifthly, the Purāṇic texts inform us that Nimi was the founder of the Videhan dynasty. This, however, is in contradiction to the evidence of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* which seems to indicate that the Videhan kingdom was first established by Videgha Māthava, immigrant from the banks of the Sarasvatī. The fact that Nimi cannot claim the distinction of being the founder of the Videhan line of kings is further attested to by the *Majjhima Nikāya* and *Nimi Jātaka* which show that the name Nimi was borne not by the first, but probably by some later king or kings of the family.

The question with which we are now confornted relates to whether the foregoing dynasties were really contemporaneous, all terminating with the Bhārata battle, as the Purāṇas would make us believe. The paucity of material does not enable us to study the problem in all its aspects, and it is not possible to determine with any amount of precision the chronological relationship even among the three leading dynasties of Group A, viz. the Pauravas, Videhas and Ikṣvākus. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*

Upaniṣad[8] seems to suggest that Janaka, the patron of Yājñavalkya, flourished at a later period than the Pārīkṣitas or sons of Parīkṣit, i.e., in the post-Bhārata-war period. Only two kings of the Videhan dynasty are known to have borne the name of Janaka, one an early king and the other the father of Sītā who was the illustrious Videhan contemporary of the Ikṣvāku king Daśaratha. If we identify the Janaka of the Vedic text with any of the two known kings, then the whole scheme of Purāṇic chronology of the dynasties of Group A becomes erroneous and the conclusion becomes inevitable that, in respect of antiquity, the Pauravas were earlier than the Videhas and Ikṣvākus and that Rāma, the remote ancestor of Bṛhadbala, flourished after the Bhārata battle. But this does not seem to be the case as the Purāṇas emphatically declare Bṛhadbala of the Ikṣvāku dynasty to have been a contemporary of Abhimanyu, the father of Parīkṣit. The identification of the Vedic Janaka with either Janaka I or Janaka II is extremely unconvincing in view of the fact that Janaka is a dynastic designation and consequently may refer to a later member of the dynasty which probably maintained its existence even in the post-Bhārata-war epoch as the Ikṣvāku line did. In his *Political History of Ancient India* (pp. 48 ff.), H. C. Raychaudhuri has attempted to establish that Janaka was separated by five or six generations or a period of 150 or 180 years from Janamejaya and by an interval of two centuries from Parīkṣit. Raychaudhuri observes, "If, following a Purāṇic tradition, we place Parīkṣit in the fourteenth century B.C., we accept a date for Guṇākhya Sāṅkhāyana, the pupil's pupil of Uddālaka.....in the sixth century B.C., we must place Parīkṣit in the ninth century B.C., and Janaka in the seventh century B.C." But unless he position of Janaka is clearly ascertained in the genealogy of the Videhan dynasty, as has not

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8 Bhujyu Lāhyāyani tested Yājñavalkya with the question *kva Pārikṣitā abhavan*, whereupon Yājñalkya replied, 'Thither where the performers of the horse-sacrifice abide.' From this it is concluded that the Pārikṣitas must have passed away by the time of Janaka (H. C. Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 49).

been done by the learned scholar, this chronological scheme does not offer any substantial assistance to us in the troubled sea of chronology.

The foregoing discussion would clearly reveal that the accounts of the royal families of the pre-Bhārata-war period sometimes have their basis in facts and are not mere products of imagination. It is undeniable that the entire account cannot be regarded as reliable, and the number of kings of particular dynasties and their order of succession cannot always be taken to be historical. As long as the Purāṇic accounts stand corroborated by the evidence of other texts, their value remains unimpeachable. A. D. Pusalker[9] has rightly observed, "Priority of date and comparative freedom from textual corruption are doubtless two strong points in favour of Vedic texts. The evidence of the Purāṇas, on the other hand, cannot be ruled out altogether, because despite a good deal of what is untrustworthy in them they alone contain something like a continuous historical narrative, and it is absurd to suppose that the elaborate royal genealogies were all merely figments of imagination or a tissue of falsehood."[10]

Leaving aside the dynasties of the early group, we may now turn towards the intermediate group of royal families which are known to have comprised the following :

1. *The Later Paurava Dynasty*. The genealogy of the family starts from Parīkṣit, son of Abhimanyu, and ends with Niramitra Kṣemaka with twenty-three kings intervening between them. The Purāṇas state that it was during the reign of

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9 *The Vedic Age*, ed. R. C. Majumdar, pp. 304-05.

10 According to Pargiter, the foregoing dynasties may be ethnically divided into three physical types, viz., (1) the Aryan represented by the Ailas or Kṣatriyas, (2) the Dravidian comprising the Mānavas, and (3) the Muṇḍā represented by the Saudyumanas. He further believes that the Ailas or Āryas entered India from the Mid-Himalayan region and not from the north-west as is generally held. But neither the ethnical identifications nor the Mid-Himalayan route theory of Aryan entry into India are regarded as convincing. For a criticism of Pargiter's theory, see *The prāci*, Vol. II. 1932, Parts III-IV, pp. 22 ff.; *Proceedings of the All-India Oriental Conference*, Vol. IX; etc.

Niicakṣu[11] that the city of Hastināpura was carried away by the Ganges whereupon the Paurava king removed his seat of government to Kauśāmbī.

2. *The Later Ikṣvāku Dynasty.* The dynasty descended from Bṛhatkṣaya, successor of Bṛhadbala, but terminated with Sumitra, son of Suratha. It is said to have comprised thirty kings in all, among whom were included Śuddhodana, Siddhārtha and Rāhula.

3. *The Bārhadratha Dynasty of Magadha.* The dynasty is said to have owed its descent to Bṛhadratha who flourished before the Bhārata battle. The genealogy of this line of kings in the post-Bhārata-battle epoch begins with Somādhi. Sixteen kings are said to have been born in this royal family, the rule of which lasted for 723 years. It is worth noticing that, from the Bārhadrathas onwards, the Purāṇas start mentioning the duration of rule of each and every king of the dynasties enumerated in them.[12]

4. *The Pradyota Dynasty.* As the Purāṇas say,[13] the Bārhadrathas, Vītihotras and Avantis having passed away, Pulika founded the Pradyota dynasty by anointing his son Pradyota by force. Pālaka, Viśākhayūpa, Ajaka and Nandivardhana ruled in succession and the dynasty lasted for 52 years (or 138 years according to some Purāṇas).

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11 *Gaṅgay=āpahṛte tasmin=nagare Nāgasāhvaye |*
tyaktvā Nicakṣur=nagaraṁ Kauśāmbyāṁ sa nivatsyati ||
"When the city of Nāgasāhavya is carried away by the Ganges, Nicakṣu will abandon it and will dwell at Kauśāmbī" (Pargiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, p. 5). Kauśāmbī is identified with Kosam near Allahabad.

12 In the case of the Vītihotras, Kaliṅgas, Aśmakas, etc., the Purāṇas do not take notice of their individual rulers, but describe the dynasties in the shortest possible space.

13 *Bṛhadratheṣv=atīteṣu Vītihotreṣv=Avantiṣu |*
Pulikaḥ svāminaṁ hatvā sva-putram=abhiṣekṣyati ||
miśatāṁ Kṣatriyāṇāṁ ca.....||
"When the Bṛhadrathas, Vītihotras and Avantis have passed away, Pulika (Vā. *Munikā*; Vs. *Sunika*; Bd. and Bh. *Śunaka*) will kill his master and anoint his own son Pradyota by force in the very sight of the Ksatriyas" (Pargiter, *op. cit.*, p. 18).

5. *The Śaiśunāga Dynasty.* The Purāṇas inform us that the Pradyota dynasty was overthrown by Śiśunāga, the founder of the Śaiśunāga dynasty. The family, to which is assigned the rule of 360 (or, 163) years, is said to have endured for ten generations. The kings who ruled in succession are Śiśunāga, Kākavarṇa, Kṣemadharman, Kṣatraujas, Bimbisāra, Ajātaśatru, Darśaka, Udayin, Nandivardhana and Mahānandin.

6. *Early Contemporary Dynasties.* In this category are included 24 Aikṣvākus, 27 Pañcālas, 24 kings of Kāśī, 28 Haihayas, 32 Kaliṅgas, 25 Aśmakas, 36 Kurus, 28 Maithilas, 23 Śūrasenas and 20 Vītihotras. All these dynasties continued to flourish till they were exterminated by Mahāpadma, the celebrated founder of the Nanda dynasty.

7. *The Nanda Dynasty.* The dynasty owes its descent to Mahāpadma,[14] 'the destroyer of all the Kṣatriyas (*sarva-Kṣatr-āntaka*) and the sole monarch (*ekarāṭ*) of the earth which was under his undisputed sway'. After a prolonged reign of 88 years, he is said to have been followed by his eight sons in succession. His successors, among whom only Sukalpa is mentioned, enjoyed the earth for a period of 12 years after which the dynasty was uprooted by the Brāhmaṇa Kauṭilya. The Nanda kingdom dwindled and the Maurya empire came to be established on its ruins.

It seems that the Purāṇic accounts of the foregoing royal families are trustworthy to a considerable degree as we find them corroborated by other evidences. The *Atharvaveda*, *Mahābhārata* and *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* allude to the existence of a Paurava king named Parīkṣit and the prosperous condition prevailing in his kingdom. The reference to Janamejaya as a Pārīkṣita (son of Parīkṣit) in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* proves beyond doubt the authenticity of the Purāṇic statement that the former was born of the latter. The Purāṇic statement as regards Janamejaya's performance of two horse-sacrifices and

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14 *Mahānandi-sutaś=c=āpi Śūdrāyāṁ Kalikāṁśajaḥ |*
utpatsyate Mahāpadmaḥ sarva-Kṣatr-āntako nṛpaḥ || (Pargiter, *op. cit.*, p. 25).

his dispute with the Brāhmaṇas is strikingly confirmed by the evidence of the Brāhmaṇa literature. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* refers to one of his Aśvamedha sacrifices which was presided over by Indrota Daivāpi Śaunaka, whereas the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* mentions the other one in which Tura Kāvaṣeya officiated as the priest. As Raychaudhuri observes, "We have here probably the germ of the Purāṇic stories about Janamejaya's dispute with the Brāhmaṇas. Vaiśampāyana, who headed the opponents of Janamejaya, undoubtedly belonged to the Kāśyapa clan." That Janamejaya was involved in animosity with the Brāhmaṇas is further corroborated by the *Arthaśāstra*.[16] Among the princes of the later Ikṣvāku dynasty of Kosala, Prasenajit and Śuddhodana find mention in several Buddhist texts. Ripuñjaya or Ariñjaya, the last ruler of the Bārhadratha dynasty, may be regarded as being identical with king Arindama of the Pāli taxts. Among the kings of the Śaiśunāga dynasty, Śiśunāga, Bimbisāra, Ajātaśatru, Darśaka, Udayin and Kākavarṇa are known to us from other sources also. King Pālaka of the Pradyota dynasty is alluded to in the Jain accounts. Similarly, many genuine historical traditions are noticeable in the Purāṇic accounts of the Nanda dynasty of Magadha. Moreover, the Purāṇic testimony that Udayin, king of Magadha, founded the city of Kusumapura in the fourth year of his reign is confirmed by the Jain tradition as recorded in the *Pariśiṣṭaparvan* which informs us that the said ruler built a new metropolis on the banks of the Ganges, which came to be known as Pāṭaliputra.

But when we turn to the other aspects of the Purāṇic accounts of the above mentioned dynasties, we are amazed to see how so many omissions, uncorroborated traditions and contradictory statements pervade them. We firstly propose to point out some of the glaring omissions in the Purāṇic genealogical accounts. The Purāṇas furnish us with an exhaustive list of the later Paurava kings; yet, strangely enough, they do not take notice of the Ābhipratāriṇas (Ābhipratārina Kākṣaseni, Vṛddhadyumna,

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15 H. C. Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

16 *Kopāj=Janameyayo Brāhmaṇeṣu vikrāntaḥ* (*Arthaśāstra*).

etc.) whose existence is testified to by the combined evidence of the Brāhmaṇa literature.[17]

The Purāṇas are silent about the illustrious Kosalan monarch Mahākosala whom we know from the Buddhist texts to have been ruling in the sixth century B.C. The Jātaka sources mention the Kuru kings named Dhanañjaya Koravya, Sutasoma, etc., who are not known from the Purāṇic accounts, although there may be some doubt for their historical existence in the absence of further evidence. The Purāṇas refer to the eight successors of Mahāpadma ; yet they specify the name of only one ruler. The lacuna is probably filled up by the *Mahābodhivaṁśa*[18] which preserves for us the list of the eight kings ruling in succession after the death of the first Nanda.

The Purāṇas sometimes make statements, the corroboration of which is wanting from any other sources hitherto discovered. The Purāṇic chroniclers, for instance, represent the Kosalan monarch Prasenajit as the son and successor of Rāhula and grandson of Siddhārtha identified with the Buddha. But this is untenable in view of the fact that Prasenajit and the Buddha were contemporaries, both being of the same age, though belonging to two separate branches of the Ikṣvāku line. This shows that the Purāṇas sometimes erroneously regard the contemporaries as successors and the collaterals as lineal descendants. It is interesting to note that the Purāṇic list of the Ikṣvākus of Kosala included 'Śākya, the designation of a clan, and Siddhārtha (Buddha) who never ruled at all'.

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17 The *Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa, Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa* and *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* mention a king of the family, named Abhipratārin, son of Kakṣasena. According to Raychaudhuri, Abhipratārin was Janamejaya's nephew (*op. cit.*, p. 44). The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and *Śāṅkhāyana Śrautasūtra* (XV. 16. 10-13) mention a king named Vṛddhadyumna, the son of Abhipratārin. The same work possibly mentions his son Rathagṛtsa (Trivedi's translation, pp. 322-23).

18 The text gives the following names : Pāṇḍuka, Pāṇḍugati, Bhūtapāla, Rāṣṭrapāla, Govisāka, Daśasiddhaka, Kaivarta and Dhana. The last of them is generally identified with the Agrammes or Xandrames of the Classical texts.

Similarly the Purāṇic statement that Śiśunāga was a predecessor of Bimbisāra and the founder of his family appears to be inconclusive. Aśvaghoṣa in his *Buddhacarita* refers to Bimbisāra as a scion of the Haryaṅka dynasty while the Buddhist *Mahāvaṁsa* represents Śiśunāga as the founder of a separate family of rulers which is said to have followed that of Bimbisāra. The Purāṇas themselves relate that Śiśunāga usurped the glory of the Pradyotas, implying thereby that he was later than the first Pradyota whom we know, from other evidences, to have been a contemporary of Bimbisāra and his son Ajātaśatru. This and other considerations[19] would clearly reveal the fact that Śiśunāga flourished long after Bimbisāra. Again, the Purāṇas regard Darśaka as the immediate successor of Ajātaśatru on the imperial throne of Magadha; but this is in contradiction to the Buddhist and Jain tradition which unanimously represents Udāyibhadda or Udayin as the son and successor of Ajātaśatru. And lastly, the Paurāṇic account of the Śaiśunāga ancestry of the Nanda line of kings is at variance with the barber pedigree of Mahāpadma as recorded in the Jain tradition[20] which, being strikingly confirmed by the Classical accounts, appears to be more reliable.

The importance of the Purāṇas is considerably diminished by the fact that they are definitely known to have recorded certain contradictory statements. Thus while the number of the Bārhadrathas of Magadha is given in some texts as 16, it is

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19 Raychaudhuri (*op. cit.*, pp. 115 ff.) has made a detailed study of the problem and established beyond doubt that Śiśunāga came after Bimbisāra and Ajātaśatru.

20 According to the Purāṇas, Mahāpadma was a son of the last Śaiśunāga king by a Śūdra mother. The Jain tradition, on the other hand, represents him as the son of a courtesan by a barber. The Classical writers also allude to the barber ancestry of the Nandas, though there is a slight discrepancy between the two accounts. Thus, while the Jain account regards Mahāpadma as the son of a barber, in the Classical account, Mahāpadma (father of Agrammes) is himself described as a barber who, with the help of the queen of the last king of the preceding line, usurped the supreme authority.

mentioned in others as 22 or 32 and the period of their rule, as recorded in them, would vary from 723 to 1000 years. A similar discrepancy in the statements of the Purāṇic bards is detected by H. C. Raychaudhuri. To use his own words, 'Thus (a) Pradyota is said to have been anointed when the Vītihotras had passed away, (b) Śiśunāga destroyed the prestige of the Pradyotas and became king, and yet, (c) contemporaneously with these Śaiśunāga kings, 20 Vītihotras (and other lines) are said to have endured for the same time'.[21] Moreover, as regards the regnal duration of Mahāpadma, Purāṇic texts appear to record two divergent traditions, the *Matsya* assigning to him 88 years, and the *Vāyu* 28 years.

As mentioned above, the third group of Purāṇic dynasties comprises the royal families which are stated to have flourished after the decline of the Nanda power. Some of the leading dynasties of this group are noted below.

1. *The Maurya Dynasty.* The founder of the Maurya line of rulers was Chandragupta who was installed on the throne of Magadha by Kauṭilya.[22] The kings of the family who ruled in succession are Candragupta, Bindusārā, Aśoka, Kuṇāla, Bandhupālita, Daśona, Daśaratha, Samprati, Śāliśūka, Devadharman, Śatadhanvan and Bṛhadratha. They were destined to hold sovereignty over the earth for 137 years until they were supplanted by the Śuṅgas.

2. *The Śuṅga Dynasty.* The earliest king of the family is Puṣyamitra who is stated to have usurped the throne of Magadha after having uprooted the last Maurya king Bṛhadratha.[23] The kings who followed him in succession were Agnimitra, Vasujyeṣṭha, Vasumitra, Andhraka, Pulindaka, Ghoṣa, Vajramitra, Bhāgavata and Devabhūmi. The dynasty endured for 112 years whereupon the earth passed to the Kāṇvas.

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21 Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

22 *Candraguptaṁ nṛpaṁ rājye Kauṭilyaḥ sthāpayiṣyati* (Pargiter, *op. cit.*, p. 28).

23 *Puṣyamitras=tu senānīr=uddhṛtya sa Bṛhadratham* (*ibid.*, p. 31).

3. *The Kāṇvāyana or Śuṅgabhṛtya Dynasty.* The dynasty descended from the Brāhmaṇa minister Vasudeva who treacherously overthrew the last Śuṅga king. The Purāṇas assign to the four-generation rule of the Kāṇvas a period of 45 years.

4. *The Andhra Dynasty.* The dynasty owes its descent to Simuka who is stated to have obtained the earth after having assailed Suśarman, the last of the Kāṇvāyanas, and the remains of the Śuṅgas' power.[24] Some Purāṇas give us the number of these kings as 30 and the total duration of their rule as 460 years. Among the renowned monarchs of the dynasty, notice may be taken of Śrī-Śātakarṇi, Hāla, Sundra-Śātakarṇi, Gautamiputra, Puloman and Yajñaśrī-Śātakarṇi.

5. *The Different Local Dynasties.* They include (i) the seven Andhras or Andhrabhṛtyas of Śrīparvata (52 years), (ii) ten Ābhīras (67 years), (iii) seven Gardabhins (72 years), (iv) eighteen Śakas (183 years), (v) eight Yavanas (87 years), (vi) fourteen Tuṣāras (107 years), (vii) thirteen Muruṇḍas (206 years), (viii) eleven Maunas (103 years), (ix) the Kilakila kings, (x) three Bāhlikas, (xi) thirteen Puṣyamitras and Paṭumitras, (xii) seven kings of the Mekala region, (xiii) nine Megha kings of Kosala, and (xiv) king Viśvasphāṇi of Magadha.

6. *The Nāga Dynasty of Vidiśā.* The following kings are mentioned as having belonged to this dynasty, viz., Bhogin, son of king Śeṣa, Sadācandra, Candrāṁśa, Dhanadharman, Vaṅgara and Bhūtinanda.

7. *The Vindhyaka Dynasty.* The dynasty was founded by Vindhyaśakti who is represented in the Purāṇas as having succeeded the Kilakila kings. The next ruler was his son Pravīra who celebrated the Vājapeya sacrifice. He was in his turn followed by his four sons.

8. *The Nāga Dynasty of Padmāvatī.* The family consisted of nine kings; but unfortunately their names are not recorded.

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24 *Kāṇvāyanam=ath=oddhṛtya Suśarmāṇaṁ prasahya tam |*
Śuṅgānāṁ c=āpi yac=chiṣṭaṁ kṣapayitvā balaṁ tadā ||
Sindhuko hy=Andhra-jātīyaḥ prāpsyat=imāṁ vasundharām ||
(Pargiter, *op. cit.*, p. 38).

9. *The Nāga Dynasty of Mathurā.* The number of the kings of the dynasty, whose names are not specifically mentioned, is given as seven in the Purāṇas.

10. *The Gupta Dynasty.* The Purāṇas are silent about the names of the kings born of the race, but simply state that they would enjoy the territories of Prayāga on the Ganges, Sāketa and Magadha.[25]

11. *The Dynasty descended from Maṇidhānya.* These rulers are stated to have succeeded in establishing their political hegemony over the Naiṣadhas, Yadukas, Śaiśītas and Kālatoyakas.

12. *The Devarakṣita Dynasty.* The Devarakṣitas are said to have brought under their imperial sway a vast dominion embracing Kosala, Andhra, Puṇḍra, Tāmralipta and the coastal territory lying on the Bay of Bengal, with their metropolis probably at the charming city of Campā.

The Purāṇic accounts of this later group of royal families may be said to have suffered from three defects, viz., discrepant statements, uncorroborated traditions and misplacement of the order of kings.

How contradictory the statements of the Purāṇas are can be illustrated with a reference to their narrative of the Maurya kings of Magadha. Thus the number of the kings of the dynasty is given differently in different texts. The *Matsya* says 10, but names only 7; a manuscript of the *Vāyu* says 9, but gives 12 names; another manuscript of the same Purāṇa as well as the *Brahmāṇḍa* says 9 and mentions 9; the *Bhaviṣya* says 10, but gives only 9; and the *Viṣṇu* says 10 and gives 10. All the Purāṇas agree in their statement that the Mauryas enjoyed the earth for 137 years; but the regnal periods put together are 160 years in the first *Vāyu* manuscript, and 133 years in the second *Vāyu* manuscript and in the *Brahmāṇḍa*. Similarly the duration of the Śuṅga dynasty is stated in the Purāṇas to be 112 years, which is

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25 *anu-Gaṅgā Prayāgaṁ ca Sāketaṁ Magadhāṁs=tathā |*
etān janapadān=sarvān bhokṣyante Gupta-vaṁśajāḥ || (Pargiter, *op. cit.*, p. 53).

incompatible with the aggregate of the reigns, which, as found in them, is 118 years. Likewise, as regards the number and duration of rule of the Śātavāhana kings, the Purāṇas record conflicting traditions; 'according to one tradition there were about seventeen, eighteen or nineteen kings, whose rule lasted some three centuries, while according to another tradition, there were thirty kings, the length of whose reigns covered a period of more than 400 years'. Some scholars, however, are of opinion that both the traditions as recorded in the Purāṇas are trustworthy, the former referring to the main line and the latter including the different branches of the family. Again, the Purāṇas declare that, after Mahāpadma, the kings would be of Śūdra origin; but they themselves contradict this when in their account of the Kāṇvāyanas, they describe them as belonging to the Brāhmaṇa community.

The Purāṇas sometimes make statements which do not stand corroborated by other evidences. According to them, Gautamīputra ruled for 21 years; but this is contrary to the epigraphic evidence which clearly establishes that the said Śātavāhana monarch ruled at least up to his 24th regnal year. Pulumāvi III who is known from the Purāṇas to have ruled for 7 years, can be supposed to have been in power for at least one year more, if the evidence of the Myakadoni inscription, dated in his eighth regnal year, is to be relied upon. The Purāṇas preserve an account of the Devarakṣita dynasty; but in the absence of any corroborative evidence from either coins or inscriptions, it is extremely difficult to ascertain how far the account is to be regarded as reliable. Some Indologists, no doubt, have attempted to justify the existence of this dynasty by assigning to it king Candra of the Meharauli iron pillar inscription[26] or by locating it in the territory of ancient Devarāṣṭa identified with either Maharashtra or a place in the Vizagapatam District; but, in the absence of definite evidence, these theories can be regarded as speculative in character. It is also interesting to note that the Purāṇic statement about the kingdom of the early Gupta rulers,

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26 B. C. Sen, *Some Historical Aspects of the Inscriptions of Bengal*, p. 207.

which includes Prayāga on the Ganges, Sāketa and Magadha, is not supported by the Chinese tradition recorded by I-tsing[27] who seems to include within it a considerable portion of Varendrī in Bengal.

Instances of the inversion of the order of kings which are found in abundance in the Purāṇic genealogical account of the two preceding groups of dynasties, are, however, rare in the case of the present group and only one instance may be cited. The Purāṇas place Āpilaka early in the list of the Śātavāhana kings; but if any credence is to be assigned to numismatic consideration,[28] the said king is to be placed among the later rulers of the dynasty.

But, in spite of the errors of omission and commission, the Purāṇas seem to have preserved many genuine historical traditions. The Purāṇic version of the story of the annihilation of the last Maurya king Bṛhadratha by Puṣyamitra Śuṅga and the subsequent foundation of the Śuṅga authority is affirmed by the writer of the *Harṣacarita*,[29] who refers to the assasination of the former

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27 I-tsing tells us that *Mahārāja* Śrī-Gupta (i.e. *Mahārāja* Gupta of the Gupta dynasty) "built a temple for the Chinese priests and granted twentyfour villages as an endowment for its maintenance. This temple, known as the 'Temple of China' was situated close to a sanctuary called Mi-li-kia-si-kia-po-no which was about forty *yojanas* to the east of Nālandā, following the course of the Ganges" (Chavannes, *Religieux Eminents*, pp. 82-83; Beal, *Life*, p. xxxvi). Scholars are now generally of opinion that 'according to the distance and direction given by I-tsing the temple must have been situated in Bengal' (R. C. Majumdar in *History of Bengal*, Vol. I, p. 69). This shows that the early dominions of the Guptas included some parts of Bengal.

28 Cf. a coin bearing the figure of an elephant with a legend in Brāhmī on the obverse, the reverse being blank. K. N. Dikshit opines that, on numismatic grounds, the place of this ruler is more with the later kings of the dynasty than with the earlier ones as indicated in the Purāṇas (*Advance*, March 10, 1935, p. 9; Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 409).

29 Bāṇa-bhaṭṭa in his *Harṣacarita* gives the following details about the incident—"While reviewing the army, under the pretext of showing him his forces, the base-born (*anārya*) general Puṣyamitra crushed his master, Bṛhadratha the Maurya, who was weak in keeping his coronation oath" (*Harṣacarita*, p. 193; *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. II, p. 363).

by the latter. We learn from the Purāṇas that the Nāgas established their rule at Vidiśā (modern Besnagar near Bhilsa), Padmāvatī (modern Padam Pawaya in the Shivapuri District of Madhya Pradesh), Mathurā and Kāntipurī (which has not yet been properly identified). The existence of several Nāga principalities, as alluded to in the Purāṇas, is strikingly attested by Samudragupta's Allahabad *praśasti* which mentions Nāgadatta, Nāgasena, Gaṇapatināga and Nandin amongst the kings of Āryāvarta exterminated by the Indian Nepoleon. Many Nāga coins have been discovered both at Padam-Pawaya and at Mathurā. The Purāṇas mention a tribe called the Puṣyamitras occupying the region near the source of the Narmadā. That there flourished a tribe of this name is probably proved by the testimony of the Bhitari pillar inscription of Skandagupta[30] which refers to an unsuccessful encounter of this tribe with the Imperial Gupta authority. A Puṣyamitra-kula is also alluded to in the Jain *Kalpasūtra*. The Purāṇas occasionally throw remarkable light upon the vexed question of the chronology of several ancient Indian dynasties. All of them unanimously declare that the Andhra Simuka, after having assailed the Kāṇvāyana Suśarman and destroyed the remains of the Śuṅgas' power, would obtain the possession of this earth. If this statement is to be relied upon, it is almost certain that Simuka was for some years a contemporary of Suśarman, the last of the Kāṇvāyanas. This would enable us to suggest for Simuka as well as for the foundation of the Śātavāhana power, a date in the middle of the first century B.C.—324 B.C.—137 years (period of the Mauryas)—112 (period of the Śuṅgas)—45 years (period of the Kāṇvas)=30 B.C. This conclusion about the date of the foundation of the Śātavāhana power seems to be in agreement with the numismatic

30 The Bhitari inscription of Skandagupta states that the Puṣyamitras, who had great resources in men and money, attacked the Gupta kingdom (*samudita-bala-kośān=Puṣyamitrāṁś=ca*). Divekar suggests that the expression should be read as *yudhy=amitrāṁś=ca* (*Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol. I, pp. 99 ff.).

evidence which also suggests for the event a date towards the middle of the first century B.C.[31]

31 The author is grateful to Prof. D. C. Sircar for his encouragement in the preparation of this paper.

V

Purāṇic and Jain Evidence on the Early Dynasties[1]

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Of the whole mass of early and early mediaeval Indian literature, it is only the Purāṇas which cared to hand over to the posterity any systematic royal genealogy. This statement does not necessarily imply, however, that all the genealogical accounts recorded in the *Rājavaṁśānucarita* section of the Purāṇas are flawless or that reference to royal families of ancient India is entirely absent in any other type of literature, religious or secular. But this remains largely true despite the presence of corroborative material in a number of non-Purāṇic literary works.

Materials incorporated in the Purāṇas for the study of royal genealogies of the 'historic' period (which roughly begins from the sixth century B.C.) are not inadequate; but it has time and again been shown by competent scholars that the Purāṇic accounts taken by themselves, do not stand on very sure legs. It is essential, to satisfy the needs of critical history, to test Purāṇic materials in the light of other sources—in some cases in the light of non-Purāṇic literary texts and mostly in the light of archaeological evidence. It is this idea that prompts us to attempt in this paper at an assessment of the relative dependability of Purāṇic and some Jain sources in drawing up a historical account of the dynasties that are known to have ruled between the sixth century B.C.[2] and the beginning of the fourth

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1 [The paper was received sometime after the Seminar.—Ed.]

2 The evidences of the Purāṇas do not indicate any such stage as 'prehistoric' or 'historic'. It seems resonable, however, to take it as a convenient starting point because comparative studies in the Purāṇic and other sources have made possible the reconstruction of a rough outline of ancient Indian political history from this period onwards, which is largely beyond the scope of controversy. It is in this sense that the term 'historic' has been used here.

century A.D.[3] For the convenience of treatment we propose to classify the dynasties enumerated in the Purāṇas[4] in terms of certain broad periods and deal with them separately : (a) Dynasties of the Pre-Maurya and Maurya periods, (b) Dynasties of the Post-Maurya and Pre-Gupta period and (c) Gupta dynasty.

Dynasties of the Pre-Maurya and Maurya Periods

In the period beginning with the fall of the Bṛhadrathas and extending upto the downfall of the Mauryas, the Purāṇas mention the Pradyotas, the Śiśunāgas, 'some early contemporary dynasties', the Nandas and the Mauryas.[5] They first mention the Pradyotas who came to power 'when the Bṛhadrathas, Vītihotras and Avantis have passed away' and it was only when the rule of the Pradyotas had terminated after the reign of five members of this line (which lasted, according to different Purāṇas for a period of 52, 152 or 138 years) that the Śiśunāgas came to rule.[6] And according to the Purāṇic testimony, Bimbisāra along with his successors belonged to the line of Śiśunāga.

It is interesting to note that relevant Jain sources confirm some of the statements made by the Purāṇas. Of the five Pradyota kings mentioned in the Purāṇas, for example, at least, two—Pradyota and Pālaka, the younger brother of Gopālaka,[7] figure in some Jain legends. Purāṇic materials, however, come into sharp conflict with Jain evidences on the point of the relative chronological position of the Pradyotas and the Śaiśnuāgas.

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3 According to Pargiter, some of the Purāṇas carry the narrative on to the rise of the Guptas.

4 For the Purāṇic lists, we are using the materials contained in Pargiter's work entitled *The Purāṇa Text of the Dynasties of the Kali Age*.

5 Pargiter, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-70.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 68.

7 Cf. 'Pradyota, Udayana and Śreṇika : A Jaina Legend' by P. D. Gune in the *Annals of the Bhandarkar O. R. Institute*, 1920-21, pp. 1-15. The tradition is confirmed by the *Kathāsaritsāgara* which refers to Pālaka and Gopālaka as the sons of Mahāsena who was, as other evidences indicate, indentical with Pradyota (*loc. cit.*).

As has already been stated, according to the Purāṇas, the Śaiśunāga dynasty came to power in the period of Śiśunāga who brought ruin to the Pradyotas, and Bimbisāra was only a later member of this family.

On the other hand, the Jain legend incorporated in the *Kumārapālapratibodha* of Somaprabha,[8] a work of the 13th century A.D., indicates the near contemporaneity of Pradyota of Ujjayinī,[9] the first member of the Pradyota family, with Udayana of Kauśāmbī and Śreṇika of Magadha.[10] The near contemporaneity of Pradyota of Avanti with Bimbisāra of Magadha is further indicated by the combined testimony of two other Jain works. The *Sthavirāvalīcaritra* or *Pariśiṣṭaparvan* by Hemacandra[11] makes Śreṇika Bimbisāra, a contemporary of Mahāvīra. A comparatively unused passage in the Jain work *Tiloyapaṇṇattī*[12] makes Pālaka roughly a contemporary of Mahāvīra. The reference to Avanti in relation to Pālaka definitely suggests his identity with the son of Pradyota and establishes the synchronism between Bimbisāra and Pradyota. It is thus evident that the Purāṇic testimony is in conflict with the Jain evidence in so far as the question relating to the relative genealogical and chronological position of the Pradyotas and Bimbisārids is concerned. It seems, however, preferable, in view of the unanimity of Jain sources which are otherwise unrelated to each other on this point, to reject the Purāṇic evidence on this

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8 P. D. Gune, *loc. cit.*

9 H. C. Raychaudhuri (*Political History of Ancient India*, 5th ed., p. 114, note 2) adduced fairly convincing arguments to establish that Pradyota of the Purāṇas and Pradyota of Avanti were identical.

10 Seṇiya, Śreṇiya or Śreṇika are different forms of the name of Bimbisāra given in Buddhist and Jain works.

11. Ed. Jacobi, I. 22-28.

12 Ed. A. N. Upadhye and H. L. Jain (Jaina Saṁrakṣaka Saṅgha) : *Jakkīe Vīrajino ṇisseyassaṁpayaṁ samāvaṇṇo takkāle abhisitto Pālaya nāmo Avantisudo* (4th Mahādhikṛta, 1505. Incidentally, to Pālaya has been assigned in the *Tiloyapaṇṇatti* a reign of 60 years, as opposed to 24 or 28 years assigned to him in the Purāṇas.

issue and to consider the members of the Pradyota family and the Bimbisārids as near contemporaries.[13]

The genealogy of the successors of Bimbisāra, as given in the Purāṇas,[14] is, however, in fair accord with the evidences of Jain texts. Of the three successors of Bimbisāra,[15] viz., Ajātaśatru, Darśaka and Udayin mentioned in the Purāṇas, two viz., Kuṇika Ajātaśatura and Udāyin, figure in Jain sources like the *Nirayāvalisūtra*,[16] *Pariśiṣṭaparvan*[17] and *Kathākośa*.[18] The authority of Buddhist evidence is justified in keeping silent about Darśaka, as there was possibly no such ruler in the line of Bimbisāra.[19]

This much about the relative dependability of the Purāṇic and Jain evidences on the genealogy and chronology of the Pradyotas and Bimbisārids. In respect of the essential details relating to the political history of the period, Jain materials seem to be far superior to the meagre data furnished by the Purāṇas. The only historical events of his period that find mention in Purāṇic literature are (i) foundation of the city of Kusumapura or Pāṭaliputra by Udayin and the transfer of the capital from

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13 H. C. Raychaudhuri (*op. cit.*, p. 115), on the authority of Buddhist sources, proves that the Śaiśunāgas represented an altogether different line and came into power later than Bimbisāra and his successors.

14 Pargiter, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

15 Reference to the other successors of Bimbisāra, viz. Nandivardhana and Mahānandin, might have been the result of some confusion affecting the value of Purāṇic chronicles. Of these, Nandivardhana might have belonged to the time of Śiśunāga (cf. H. C. Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 222). Incidentally, it is interesting to note that the *Prabandhacintāmaṇi* of Merutuṅga (trans. C. H. Tawney, pp. 180-81) refers to one Nandivardhana, a prince of Kusumapura; but, from the nature of his description in this work, his identification with Nandivardhana of the Purāṇas is a remote possibility.

16 Referred to by H. Jocobi in his edition of the *Kalpasūtra* of Bhadrabāhu, p. 5.

17 Ed. H. Jocobi, IV. 1-9; VI. 21-32.

18 Trans. C. H. Tawney, pp. 177-79.

19 H. C. Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

Rājagṛha to this city,[20] and (ii) destruction of the power of Avanti by Śiśunāga. Contemporary events of great political significance like the long drawn hostility between the Pradyotas and the Bimbisārids reflected in the attack on Rājagṛha in the days of Bimbisāra by Pradyota and the hostile relations between the king of Avanti and Udāyin,[21] extension of the power of the Bimbisārids to Campā,[22] enmity between Ajātaśatru and Vaiśālī,[23] etc., scattered through different Jain sources, remain entirely absent in the Purāṇic evidence on this period. Jain sources thus make definite improvement upon what we know from Purāṇic testimony alone.

The Purāṇic and Jain sources relating to the period that followed the termination of the rule of the Bimbisārids are, in some cases, in fair agreement with each other. It is true that the Jain works make no mention of the Śaiśunāgas; but the Nandas and the Mauryas who came after them, according to the Purāṇas, figure in a number of Jain works.[24] The statement in the Purāṇas regarding the origin of Nanda from the union of Mahānandin, the last Śiśunāga ruler, with a Śūdra woman is somewhat dissimilar to the assertion of the *Pariśiṣṭaparvan* that Nanda was the son of a courtesan by a barber; but, in view of the relative obscurity of Mahānandin, the evidence of the *Pariśiṣṭaparvan* on this issue may be correct.[25] The statement of

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20 The *Pariśiṣṭaparvan* (VI. 21-32) and *Āvaśyakaniryukti* (XVII. 11. 27) also give elaborate details about the selection of the site of Pāṭaliputra and the foundation of the capital by Udāyin there.

21 P. D. Gune, *loc. cit.*; *Pariśiṣṭaparvan*, p. 42.

22 *Pariśiṣṭaparvan*, Canto VI. 21-32.

23 Hoernle, *Uvāsagadasāo*, II. Appendix, p. 7 (cited by H. C. Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 211).

24 Cf. *Kathāsaritsāgara* (Durgaprasad's and Parab's ed., p. 10) which refers to Yoga-Nanda; *Pariśiṣṭaparvan* (VI. 231-43) which mentions Nanda immediately after Udāyin; *Āvaśyakaniryukti*, XVII. 11.30; *Prabandhacintāmaṇi* (pp. 191-92) which incorporates a legend about Mahānanda who may be identical with Mahāpadma of the Purāṇas.

25 Cf. Curtius Rufus, Quintus, *History of Alexander the Great*, Book IX, Chapter II (R. C. Majumdar, *The Classical Accounts of India*, p. 129).

the *Pariśiṣṭaparvan*[26] regarding the nine Nandas ruling in succession is in remarkable agreement with the Purāṇic reference to nine Nanda kings. Further, the description of Mahāpadma as *sarva-Kṣatr-āntako nṛpaḥ* in the Purāṇas[27] accord with what the *Pariśiṣṭaparvan* writes on the extensive power of king Nanda.[28] The dynastic revolution which brought about a major change in the politics of Magadha by bringing Maurya Candragupta, aided by Cāṇakya, into power, at the cost of the total extinction of the Nandas, is indicated both by Purāṇic passages and by more than one Jain work.[29] Among the many successors of Candragupta mentioned in the Purāṇas only four figure in Jain texts. The *Pariśiṣṭaparvan*[30] refers to Bindusāra, Aśokaśrī, Kuṇāla and Samprati among the successors of Candragupta; but, apart from the consideration of the number of Candragupta's successors, Purāṇic testimony varies again from the said Jain account in that, while in the Purāṇic list, Kuṇāla figures as a ruler, in the *Pariśiṣṭaparvan*, which gives a detailed story about how he became blind, he is not given that status. The details of a legendary character found particularly in the *Pariśiṣṭaparvan* relating to the rule of the Mauryas do not find confirmation in the Purāṇas and the dependability of these accounts, unsubstantiated by other sources, is open to justified doubts.

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26 Canto VIII.

27 Pargiter, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

28 *Pariśiṣṭaparvan*, VII. 81.

29 *Ibid.*, VIII. 171-445, give the long story of how Cāṇakya brought about the ruin of Nanda power through Candragupta. Jacobi points out that, according to Leumann, these stories were taken from the *Cūrṇi* and *Ṭīkā* of the *Āvaśyakaniryukti* (IX. 64-38; VIII 149.2). Incidentally, it may be noted that, according to the *Pariśiṣṭaparvan* (VIII. 339), the accession of Candragupta took place 155 years after the Nirvāṇa of Mahāvīra. R. Shamasastry's trans. of Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* (Introduction, p. xxi) shows that this event finds mention also in the *Nītivākyāmṛta* of Somadevasūri, a Jain writer. The identity of the Purāṇic Kauṭilya and Cāṇakya of Jain legends seems to be established from what he writes in this connection (*op. cit.*, pp. xxi-xxii).

30 Cantos VIII-IX; for Samprati, cf. also the *Pāṭaliputrakalpa* of Jinaprabhasūri (*Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 6-15) cited by H. C. Raychaudhuri (*op. cit.*, p. 351).

Dynasties of the Post-Maurya and Pre-Gupta Period

What strikes one most when he begins to deal with the dynasties of the post-Maurya period is that relevant Jain sources, compared to the evidences of the Purāṇas, tend to become more casual and inconsistent about the numerous post-Mauryan dynasties some of which are local and listed in the Purāṇas while some have been mentioned in the Jain sources; the Jain texts again refer to some dynasties which find no mention in any of the Purāṇas.[31] In respect of details relating to the dynasties that the Purāṇic and Jain sources have in common, there is hardly anything in Jain works that can serve as useful guide to the historian.

Of the different Śuṅga rulers listed in the Purāṇas, only Puṣyamitra, Agnimitra and Vasumitra seem to have been known to Jain sources, though the relations among the three were not posssibly clear to the Jain writers. And further, the Jains contradict the statements of the Purāṇas regarding the regnal period of the rulers. Puṣyamitra, according to the *Tiloyapaṇṇattī*, ruled for 30 years and Agnimitra-Vasumitra for a period of 60 years[32] and certainly these statements are not even in distant agreement with the Purāṇic evidence.

The other post-Mauryan dynasties that find mention in the Purāṇas and some Jain works are those of the Śālivāhana-Śātavāhana rulers of Pratiṣṭhāna;[33] but it is not possible to form

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31 Pargiter, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-74. It may be mentioned in this connection that the *Tiloyapaṇṇatti* refers to the rule of Caturmukha for 42 years (4th Mahādhikṛta, v. 1504), of the Vijayavaṁśiyas for 155 years (v. 1506), and of Naravāhana for 40 years (v. 1507); but none of them appears to have been known to the Purāṇas. And, though the same work dwells in some details on the chronological position of Śaka-nṛpa (vv. 1496-1503), neither this reference, nor the references to different post-Mauryan Śaka dynasties in the Purāṇas throw any light on the history of Śaka rule in India.

32 *Tesaṁ vassā supussamittammi* (v. 1506). H. C. Raychaudhuri (*op. cit.* p. 391, note 1) cites another Jain evidence in support of this statement : *Vasumitt-Aggimitta-satthi* (v. 1507).

33 *Prabandhacintāmaṇi*, pp. 14-15; *Kalpapradīpa* of Jinaprabhasūri cited by V. N. Mandlik in his 'Sātavāhana and Śālivāhana and the Śālivāhana Saptaśati (*JBBRS*, Vol. X, pp. 127-38), etc.

any proper idea about the nature of Śātavāhana rule in the Deccan from these scanty references and, compared to elaborate genealogical and chronological details about the Andhra-Śātavāhanas furnished by the Purāṇas, the Jain data are insignificant. It is, however, interesting to note that at least the *Tiloyapaṇṇattī*[34] possibly refers to the rule of the Andhra-bhṛtyas known also from the Purāṇas. And further, some Jain texts refer to the ruler Śaktikumāra (not mentioned in the Purāṇas) whom H. C. Raychaudhuri, on the authority of the Nanaghat inscriptions, would like to include in the line of Śātavāhana rulers.[35]

Regarding the Muruṇḍas, the Purāṇic and Jain sources seem to be supplementary to each other. Among the various local dynasties ruling presumably after the Andhras, the Purāṇas mention the Muruṇḍas and state that 13 future Muruṇḍa kings along with low caste men, all of Mleccha origin, will enjoy it half 400 years.[36] Purāṇic evidence regarding the duration of Muruṇḍa rule is in clear disagreement with the period of 40 years assigned to them in the *Tiloyapaṇṇattī*; but it may be pointed out in this connection that the *Tiloyapaṇṇattī*[37] contains a single reference to the Muruṇḍas, and that too is extremely casual. Some Jain sources, however, seem to supplement Purāṇic evidence on the Muruṇḍas by referring to the seat of Muruṇḍa authority. It has been pointed out that both the *Pādaliptaprabandha* of the *Prabhāvakacarita* and the *Āvaśyakavṛtti* suggest Pāṭaliputra in Magadha as the seat of Muruṇḍa power, though it could well cover other regions of the west as indicated by the Jain version of the *Siṁhāsanadvātriṁśikā*.[38]

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34 *Tatto bhatthaṭṭhanā jādā* (v. 1507); *bhatthaṭṭhanā kālo doṇṇi sayāiṁ havāṁti bādāla, i.e.*, 'the Bhṛtya-Andhras will rule for 242 years' (v. 1508).

35 Cf. *Viracaritra* (*Ind. Ant.*, Vol. VIII, p. 201) cited by H. C. Raychaudhuri (*op. cit.*, p. 417, note 4). Another reference to Śaktikumāra is in the *Kalpapradīpa* of Jinaprabhasūri (V. N. Mandlik, *op. cit.*, p. 134)—*tataḥ Śaktikumāro rājyābhiṣikto Sātavāhanāyanīḥ tadanatara adya=āpi rājā na kaścit Pratiṣṭhāne praviśati vīrakṣetra iti.*

36 Pargiter, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

37 *Cālaṁ muruda(ya) vaṁsā* (v. 1506).

38 See S. Chattopadhyay, *Early History of North India*, pp. 117-19.

And what may induce one to commend the fragmentary Jain source to act as a supplement to Purāṇic evidence, at least in some cases, is that the Jain evidence relating to the territory where the Muruṇḍas ruled finds support in some widely varying sources.

The Gupta Dynasty

The last dynasty that finds mention both in the Purāṇic and Jain sources is that of the Gupta rulers. Despite certain obvious gaps, our knowledge of the Gupta dynasty is more or less elaborate; but as is well-known, it is derived neither from Purāṇic nor from Jain sources. With the exception of the unhistorical materials contained in the forged *Kaliyugarājavṛttānta* in the *Bhaviṣyottara Purāṇa*,[39] the scope of Purāṇic evidences on the Guptas is strictly limited to the description of the territories enjoyed by the Guptavaṁśajas and the value of that description is considerably affected by wide discrepancies in the different manuscripts of the Purāṇas. The Purāṇic passage which was taken by Pargiter to describe Candragupta's dominions[40] is shown to have different versions in different manuscripts[41] and thus proves to be of little use to the historian.

The Jain evidences on the Guptas lead us to no better goal. Casual references to the Guptas in Jain sources betray, in fact, the confusion of Jain writers regarding the history of the dynasty. The *Tiloyapaṇṇattī*, for example, has in one place a statement regarding the duration of Gupta rule and contradicts in another place the former statement by giving a different figure.[42]

It must, however, be conceded that the Purāṇic and Jain sources on the Guptas, however fragmentary and partly corrupt

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39 R. C. Majumder, 'Forged Purāṇa Text on the Imperial Guptas' (*IHQ*, Vol XX, pp. 345-50).

40 Pargiter, *op. cit.*, p. 53; introduction, p. xii.

41 D. C. Ganguly in *IHQ*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 386 ff.; Vol. XXI, pp. 141 ff.

42 *Doṇi sadâ paṇavaṇṇā Guttāṇaṁ* (v. 1504); *tato Guttā tāṇaṁ rajje doṇi ya sayāṇi igitīsā* (v. 1508). [See p. 150, note 43.—Ed.]

they might be, were possibly drawn from some genuine accounts. Independent evidences quite effectively demonstrate that the regions enumerated in the Purāṇic description of Gupta dominions (though there is often some confusion in properly interpreting the different versions of the relevant Purāṇic passage) were really ruled over by the Guptas. And however contradictary the Jain statements might be on the duration of Gupta rule, 255 years and 231 years quite closely approximate the total duration of Gupta rule, as suggested by other sources.[43]

The study made above, though incomplete in respect of details, possibly brings out some important conclusions regarding the nature and relative dependability of the Purāṇic and Jain sources relating to the early dynastic history of India. We have tried to show that references to some dynasties flourishing between the 6th century B.C. and the beginning of the 4th century A.D. are common to both these sources and that the relevant details incorporated in the Purāṇas and the Jain works serve as effective supplement to each other. It has, however, to be noted that, of the numerous Imperial and local dynasties listed in the Purāṇas, only a few have become subject of casual notice in the Jain texts. Thus, though faulty and mutually inconsistent in many cases, the Purāṇic evidence taken as a whole is more systematic and cover a wider field than what is covered by the evidence of the Jain texts. It is true that Jain historical materiral relating to the period when Mahāvīra, the real founder of Jainism, flourished is more elaborarte and effectively supplement Purāṇic accounts and that early mediaeval Jain literature throws interesting side light on different aspects of the political life of the period; but for the major part of the age with which we are concerned in this paper, the Jain sources remain comparatively inadequate.

Finally, however, we would like to conclude with the note that, though, for the purposes of the reconstruction of political history, the value of Purāṇic or Jain sources cannot

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43 [Cf. D. C. Sircar in *Eassays presented to Sir Jadunath Sarkar*, ed. H. R. Gupta, Punjab University, 1958, pp. 343-47.—Ed.]

be underrated, taken by themselves they do not count much and our present knowledge of the political history of ancient India permits us to assert that most of the important pages of the history of the period would have remained unwritten had not archaeological evidences of a more dependable character come to our aid.

VI

The Purāṇic Tradition and Agnimitra Śuṅga

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The accounts of the Purāṇas with regard to the genealogies of the royal lines that are supposed to have existed before the commencement of the so-called Kali age may not be regarded as authentic. But the accounts of the dynasties that ruled after the beginning of that era, as furnished by some Purāṇas are not altogether fictitious, since their existence is vouchsafed by other sources as well. One such is the dynasty of the Śuṅgas who are said to have succeeded the Mauryas on the imperial throne of Pāṭaliputra. The existence of a Śuṅga line is proved by the Bharhut gateway inscription.[1] The story of the foundation of the dynasty by Puṣyamitra, the general of the Mauryas, is corroborated, with greater details, by Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita*.[2] But there is some confusion with regard to the Purāṇic tradition about Agnimitra who is generally believed to be the son as well as the successor of Puṣyamitra.[3] That Agnimitra was the son of Puṣyamitra is also known from Kālidāsa's drama *Mālavikāgnimitra*.[4] But difficulty arises with regard to his succession, since the Purāṇic tradition is not unanimous in this respect and the *Mālavikāgnimitra*, our only other source of information, does not throw any light on the point.

Now, out of the six Purāṇas, which speak of the Śuṅgas, no genuine MS of the *Bhaviṣya* is extant. Of the remaining five, *Viṣṇu* and *Bhāgavata* contain a list of names of the kings, not

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1. See D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, p. 90.
2. See G. Bühler in *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. II, p. 363.
3. Cf. F. E. Pargiter, *The Purāna Text of the Dynasties of the Kali Age*, p. 31 (text) and p. 70 (translation).
4. *Mālavikāgnimitra*, Act V. 14.

their respective reign periods. Only the *Matsya*, *Vāyu* and *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇas* give us the complete account of the Śuṅga monarchs, i.e. their names along with their reign periods. But it is interesting to note that one of the numerous MSS of the *Matsya Purāṇa* mentions the name of Agnimitra, who is the second member of the Śuṅga dynasty according to the other Purāṇas. Is this omission due to textual blunder, or deliberate? To a critical student, the omission of Angnimitra's name in all the numerous MSS of the *Matsya Purāṇa* would not appear to be due to any textual blunder, for, in that case, the copyist would commit mistakes in a few MSS, not in all the MSS consistently. Pargiter has already shown that the *Matsya Purāṇa*, although based on the same original source from which other Purāṇas also derived their material, has a character of its own, distinct from that of the *Vāyu* and *Brahmāṇḍa*, and is earlier than the two.[5] The *Viṣṇu* and *Bhāgavata* are still later than the *Vāyu* and *Brahmāṇḍa*. Hence, the tradition recorded in the *Matsya Purāṇa*, being the earliest, seems to be the most reliable one, and textual corruptions are less likely to have crept into its MSS.

That the silence of the *Matsya Purāṇa* with regard to Agnimitra is not due to error, but appears to have some definite significance can be shown from a critical study of the question of the total duration of the dynasty. In spite of difference in details, all the five Purāṇas agree in giving the total number of Śuṅga kings as 'ten', and the total duration of the dynasty as '112 years'. But the actual total, according to the aggregate of reign periods, differ in the different Purāṇas; it is 149 according to *Vāyu*, 142 according to *Brahmāṇḍa*, and 112, 114 or 109 according to the different MSS of the *Matsya Purāṇa* (cf. Appendix below). This discrepancy is due to the fact that the individual reign periods vary in the case of the first and eighth kings in the *Matsya*, *Vāyu* and *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇas*, whereas different MSS of the *Matsya* vary even with regard to details about the fifth and seventh kings, although all the *Matsya* MSS agree

5 See Pargiter, *op. cit.*, p. vi.

in excluding Agnimitra from the list of Śuṅga kings. Now the duration of 112 years, which is assigned to the Śuṅga dynasty invariably by all the Purāṇas, corresponds exactly with the sum-total of reign periods only according to those *Matsya* lists which have the nearest agreement with the *Vāyu* and *Brahmāṇḍa* accounts. And significantly enough, it is only by excluding the reign period of Agnimitra, which is eight years according to the *Vāyu* and *Brahmāṇḍa*, that these *Matsya* lists conform to the total of 112 years.[6]

It is known from the *Mālavikāgnimitra* that Agnimitra ruled as viceroy (*goptṛ*) of his father Puṣyamitra at Vidiśā.[7] But, as a matter of fact, he was virtually the idependent ruler of Vidiśā. Kālidāsa styles him as *rājan* (king) and it may be noted that he conducted warfare with the neighbouring kingdom of Vidarbha, quite independently and without consulting his father.[8] But neither the *Mālavikāgnimitra* nor any other literary text indicates that Agnimitra ever succeeded his father on the imperial throne of Pāṭaliputra. It is quite likely that Agnimitra ruled at Vidiśā while his father was ruling at Pāṭaliputra and that he predeceased his father. Such an eventuality explains the apparent anomalies in the Purāṇic accounts so far as Agnimitra is concerned. He was a member of the Śuṅga dynasty no doubt, and he ruled practically independently as a king;[9] so he is included in the

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6 Cf. the total reign periods according to the different Purāṇas as shown in the Appendix. It is only according to the *dfgjm* MSS of the *Matsya Purāṇa* that we get the aggregate of 112 years. Cf. *Comprehensive History of India*, Vol. II, p. 101, for the theory which tries to maintain the total duration of 112 years by excluding the reign periods of the fifth, sixth and seventh Śuṅga kings, which also amount to 8 years, in place of the years of Agnimitra's rule. But in that case, the total number of Śuṅga kings would be only 7, as against the significantly unanimous Purāṇic tradition which gives it as '10'.

7 *Mālavikāgnimitra*, Act V. 20.

8 *Ibid.*, Act I. 6-8 and Act V. 13-14.

9 To Agnimitra Śuṅga is often attributed some copper coins found from Ahicchatrā and Kauśāmbī bearing the name of Agnimitra. Cf. K. P. Jayaswal, *JBORS*, Vol. III, p. 479, note 15, and Vol. X, p. 206;

lists of ten Śuṅga kings in most of the Purāṇas. And curiously enough, the *Matsya Purāṇa*, which does not include him in the list of Śuṅga kings, maintains the total number of these ruling princes as 'ten'. This shows that Agnimitra is actually taken into account as one of the ruling members of the Śuṅga family even by the *Matsya Purāṇa* when it gives the total number of kings, although it does not mention him by name and count his reign period of eight years separately, since he did not survive his father to succeed him, and because his rule at Vidiśā converged with that of his father at Pāṭaliputra. This, at the present moment, seems to be the most probable explanation of the apparent anomalies of the different Purāṇic accounts regarding Agnimitra, who was the son—but not probably the successor—of Puṣyamitra Śuṅga.

APPENDIX

Different Purāṇic accounts (except those of *Viṣṇu* and *Bhāgavata*, which, though they give the total number of kings as 'ten' and their total reign period as '112 years', do not enumerate the individual reign periods) including those of different *Matsya* MSS are given below.[10]

H. C. Raychaudhuri, *Pol. Hist. Anc. Ind.*, 4th ed., pp. 327 ff. This attribution is highly untenable from a critical numismatic point of view, because the Agnimitra coins of Ahicchatrā and Kauśāmbī belong to two distinct series of purely local issues, from which the coins bearing the name of Agnimitra cannot be singled out, and because these are much later in date than the period of Agnimitra Śuṅga. Moreover, it is doubtful if he had any sway over the Ahicchatrā and Kauśāmbī regions and if he ever issued any coins at all; for Vidiśā, the seat of Agnimitra's power, has not so far produced any coin bearing the name of Agnimitra.

10 For the different versions of the Purāṇic accounts, cf. Pargiter, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-33, and notes; and for the references to the different *Matsya* MSS, see *ibid.*, p. xxxi.

Matsya—*dfgjm* MSS (10 kings : 112 years	*Matsya*—*a n* MSS (10 kings : 112 years)	*Matsya*—other MSS (10 kings : 112 years)	*Vāyu* (10 Śuṅgas : 112 years)	*Brahmānda* (10 Śuṅgas : 112 years)
1. Puṣyamitra (36 years)	Puṣyamitra (36 years)	Puṣyamitra (36 years)	Puṣyamitra (60 years)	Puṣyamitra (60 years)
2. ...	...	..	Agnimitra (8 years)	Agnimitra (8 years)
3. Vasujyeṣṭha (7 years)	Vasujyeṣṭha (7 years)	Vasujyeṣṭha (7 years)	Sujyeṣṭha (7 years)	Sujyeṣṭha (7 years)
4. Vasumitra (or Sumitra —*d* MS) (10 years)	Vasumitra (10 years)	Vasumitra (10 years)	Vasumitra (10 years)	Vasumitra (10 years)
5. Antaka (2 years)	Antaka (7 years)	Antaka (2 years)	Andhraka (2 years)	Bhadra (2 years)
6. Pulindaka (3 years)	Pulindaka (3 years)	Pulindaka (3 years)	Pulindaka (or Mulindaka—*e* MS) (3 years)	Pulindaka (3 years)
7. Yomegha (3 years)	..	..	Ghoṣa (3 years)	Ghoṣa (3 years)
8. Vajramitra (9 years)	Vajramitra (9 years)	Vajramitra (9 years)	Vajramitra (14 years—*e* MS)	Vajramitra (7 years)
9. Samābhāga (32 years)	Samābhāga (32 years)	Samābhāga (32 years)	Bhāgavata (32 years)	Bhāgavata (32 years)
10. Devabhūmi (10 years)	Devabhūmi (10 years)	Devabhūmi (10 years)	Devabhūmi (10 years)	Devabhūmi (10 years)
112 years	114 years	109 years	149 years	142 years

VII

Lunar Affiliation of Purāṇic Genealogy

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In the Epics and Purāṇas we find that most of the kings claim their origin either from the sun or from the moon. This also holds good in the case of the later kings belonging to the historical age. The conception of the sun or of the moon as the divine ancestor of the royal dynasties is highly interesting from an anthropological point of view. In the present paper, I wish to deal with this strange feature of the Purāṇic genealogy especially the lunar affliations of the Purāṇic kings.

According to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, Brahman emanated from the navel of Viṣṇu; from Brahman sprang Atri and from Atri the moon. The moon was bestowed lordship over the stars, the herbs and the Brāhmaṇas. The moon performed the Rājasūya sacrifice which aroused vanity in him. He seduced Tārā, the wife of Bṛhaspati, and did not return her in spite of the request of the gods. Therefore the gods waged war against the moon who, on his own part, was assisted by Śukra and others. The war, however, was a drawn game, and at the arbitration of Brahman, it was decided that the moon would return Tārā to her legal husband. Meanwhile Tārā brought forth a child whose father was the moon. The child was named Budha; from Budha sprang Purūravas and from the latter sprang Āyus. This is the story of the origin of the lunar dynasty.[1]

From an anthropological point of view, we cannot ignore the aforesaid myth as a creation of the story-teller's fancy. Hutton Webster writes, "There is good reason for believing that among many primitive peoples the moon, rather than the sun,

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1 *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, IV. 6.

the planets or any constellation, first excited the imagination and aroused feelings of superstitious awe or of religious veneration."[2] Payne says that the worship of the moon naturally precedes that of the sun.[3] The licentious character of the moon, as we find in the Purāṇas, is not an isolated myth. The male moon-god is everywhere in the habit of kidapping women.[4] The aborigines of Central Australia represent the moon as claiming that all women belong to him by right, and that it is by his consent only that they are permitted to marry mortal husbands.[5] In Greenland, it is believed that the moon comes down at night to intercourse with women, and "young maids are afraid to stare at the moon, imagining they may get a child by the bargain".[6] Corresponding beliefs centering round the moon also prevail in Europe.[7] From the time of the *Ṛgveda* there was a mystical belief that the moon was the divine guardian of a girl, and according to the *Gṛhyasaṅgraha*[8] and the *Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra*,[9] he enjoys a girl when she develops the signs of puberty. In the *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad*, it is stated that, "From the wise moon, who orders the seasons, consisting of fifteen parts when he is born, from the moon who is the abode of our ancestors the seed is derived. The seed, even myself, the gods gathered up into an active man, and through an active man they brought me to a mother."[10] In many places of India and elsewhere, the moon is conceived as the tribal ancestor, and where matriarchal features are still prominent, as the tribal ancestress. It is now evident that, in primitive thought, the moon is regarded

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2 *Rest Days*, pp. 124 ff.
3 *History of the New World*, Vol. I, p. 493.
4 *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. XX, p. 28.
5 Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 412 ff.
6 Egede, *A Description of Greenland*, p. 209.
7 Aranason, *Icelandic Legends*, Vol. II, p. 635; Dyer, *English Folklore*, p. 41; Logan, *The Scottish Gael*, Vol. II, pp. 332, 360
8 *Ṛgveda*, X. 85. 40-41.
9 Quoted in the Com. on *Gobhila Gr. Sūt.*, III. 4 .6.
10 *Pāraskara*, I. 4. 16; cf. *Saṁvarta Saṁhitā*, 64-67.

as the cause of conception and generation. The moon is the regulator and, according to primitive ideas, the cause of the periodical functions of women. Referring to the Egyptian conception of the moon, Elliot Smith remarks that "the moon was regarded as the controller of menstruation. The Placenta, and also the child, were considered to be formed of menstrual blood. The welfare of the placenta was therefore considered to be under the control of the moon."[12] The moon is not only thought of as the source of the reproductive power of women, but likewise all their other powers and functions, especially those which seem to belong to their special competence, such as agricultural magic and others. Among the Chukchi, the magician, "when he desires to make especially powerful incantations, must strip himself naked and go out of his house at night when the moon is shining".[13] On the Gold Coast, that is modern Ghana, the same word means both 'moon' and 'magic'.[14] In Ashango, moon is conceived as the source of magical power.[15] The Thonga magicians of South Africa in the time of performing their functions are said to have become *thwaza* or possessed by the moon.[16]

Thanks to Frazer's valuable researches in the origin of kingship, it is now established that kingship originated from agricultural magic.[17] The kings were originally magicians. As the moon is specially conceived as the source of magical powers, it is evident that kingship has some logical connexion with the moon. From this point of view, the lunar dynasties of the Epics and Purāṇas are to be interpreted. In fact, examples can be cited from the Epics and Purāṇas that the kings of the lunar dynasty performed certain functions which belonged to the special competence of the moon. According to Frazer, magic was

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11 *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. I, pp. 233 ff.
12 *The Evolution of the Dragon*, p. 48.
13 Bogorus, *The Chukchee*, pp. 305, 448.
14 Ellies, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples*, p. 19.
15 Chaillu, *Journey to Ashango-land*, p. 238.
16 Junod, *Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. II, pp. 451, 453.
17 See Frazer's *Magical Origin of the Kings;* also *The Dying God*.

primarily agricultural; therefore the most common duty of the magician is to bring rain. In later age when the functions of magicians were vested in the king, one of his essential duty was the magical control of rain. Among most of the primitive peoples, the king was the rain-maker. Instances are frequently found from the Epics and the Purāṇas that kings had to fight against drought. In primitive belief, it was the moon who was the controller of water and moisture. In Vedic myth, the moon is the ruler over all waters.[18] In China, the moon rules the waters,[19] while in Japan, he rules over the "blue waste of the sea with its multitudinous waters."[20] In Egypt, the moon-god, Khons, was the controller of the waters of the Nile.[21] The watery character of the moon was well known even in the sixteenth century Europe. Shakespeare wrote :

"The moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her eyes, washes all the air."[22]

Thus, in the Purāṇic conception of the lunar dynasty, relics of a very primitive belief are discernible. The myths centering round the conception of the moon as well as the lunar dynasty have some positive significance if studied from a comparative point of view. Otherwise, it is not possible to give answer to the question why from the Purāṇic age down to the historical period so many dynasties associated their names with the moon.

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18 Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 107.
19 Mayers, *The Chinese Reader's Manual*, p. 288.
20 Griffis, *Japanese Fairy World*, p. 299.
21 Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of Ancient Egyptians*, Vol. III, p. 375.
22 *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, II. 2.

VIII

Early History of the Śaunakas

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To readers of the *Mahābhārata* and some of the principal Purāṇas, Śaunaka must be quite a familiar name. It was to some *Kulapati* Śaunaka and his associates at Naimiṣ-āraṇya (identified with modern Nimisa or Nimsār on the river Gomatī in U.P.) that the great Epic, *Mahābhārata* by Vedavyāsa, then called *Jaya* or *Bhārata*, is said to have been recited by Sauti Ugraśravas, for the second time, the first recitation having been made somewhat earlier at Taxila by Vyāsa's disciple, Vaiśampāyana, at the instance of the author himself, before young Janamejaya and his brothers, his priests, a number of his principal councillors, and also the sages and *Sūtas* of Vyāsa's train. It was probably at Naimiṣ-āraṇya again that the *Purāṇasaṃhitā* of Vyāsa was recited for the first time by *Sūta* Lomaharṣaṇa, father of Ugraśravas and a direct disciple of the compiler, which explains why we find mention of his name as the reciter and that of the above *Kulapati* as the chief listener in some Purāṇas like the *Brahma*, *Harivaṃśa* and *Garuḍa*. A few others, like the *Vāyu*, *Brahmāṇḍa* and *Matsya*, show evidences of having been recited at Kurukṣetra, during the reign of king Adhisīmakṛṣṇa, third in descent from Janamejaya, by some later *Sūtas*, before the sages of Naimiṣa headed by a Śaunaka. Some Śaunakas figure as seers of the second *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgveda*, while some others are named as seers of the *Atharvaveda*. The *Atharvaveda*, commented on by Sāyaṇa, is known to be a Śaunakian recension. Other prominent Śaunaka sages and Vedic teachers are mentioned not only in the Brāhmaṇa, Āraṇyaka and Upaniṣadic texts, but also in the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas. There are, besides a number of exegetical texts related to the *Ṛgveda* and the *Atharvaveda*, which are attributed to teachers

bearing the surname of *Śaunaka*. It is thus a familiar name to readers of Vedic and non-Vedic texts alike, and it can be easily imagined that there should be some natural curiosity among readers of such texts to know something about the early history and genealogy of the Śaunakas. Unfortunately, the only serious attempt in this direction so far appears to be that of Pargiter. That scholar tried to trace the origin of the Śaunaka family, and also to draw up a chronological table of the Śaunakas; but he failed due mainly to his peculiar abhorrence for the evidences of the Vedic texts, which he characterised as Brāhmaṇical fabrications. Nevertheless, his researches in this direction are to be gratefully remembered. An attempt will be made here to trace the early history of the Śaunakas, and it will be found that Pargiter's failure was due not so much to lack of appropriate materials as to his negligence to sort them out and utilise them properly. He relied too much on the so-called Kṣatriya tradition of the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas, neglected the thread offered by the *Vedārthadīpikā*, commentary on the *Sarvānukramaṇī* of Kātyāyana, and brought himself down in a quagmire. It will also be found that the Vedic texts are not merely ritualistic treatises, but also sometimes contain very useful historical materials which, if handled and utilised carefully and supplemented by the evidences of the Epics and the Purāṇas, may help to open some of the baffling knots of ancient Indian history.

The general impression among scholars has been that Śaunaka is a personal name, and that all the Śaunakas mentioned in the Vedic, Epic and Purāṇa texts represent but one individual. This is not true. The word *Śaunaka* is a derivative of Śunaka, and there can be no doubt that the seers, sages and Vedic teachers bearing the surname of Śaunaka were all descended from some Śunaka whoever he might have been. According to the evidence of some Śrauta texts (*Āśvalāyana*, *Baudhāyana* and *Āpastamba*), the Śunaka-gotra happens to be an offshoot of the famous Bhārgava group of families. Śunaka, as the originator of the families of the Śaunakas, was thus a Bhārgava *par excellence*. The second *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgveda* is known in the Vedic texts also as the *Śaunaka-maṇḍala* or *Gṛtsamada-maṇḍala*, of which the principal seer is Gṛtsamada. It may other-

wise be called the *Bhārgava-maṇḍala* as well, just as the 4th and 6th *maṇḍalas* may rightly be called the *Āṅgirasa-maṇḍalas*, both Gautama Vāmadeva and Bārhaspatya Bharadvāja, the principal seers of these two *maṇḍalas*, being descendants of the old Āṅgirasa family. Seer Gṛtsamada was thus a Śaunaka (son or descendant of Śunaka) and a Bhārgava too, and he has been actually named as such in the superscriptions of those hymns of the second *maṇḍala* of which he happens to be the seer. It is but natural to expect that the correct and the most authentic account of the origin of the Śaunaka family was best preserved among the Śaunakas themselves, and, fortunately for us, such an account, however brief and wanting in details, is found in at least two Śaunakian texts, the *Ṛṣyanukramaṇī* and the *Ārṣānukramaṇī*, and also in a third text, the *Sarvānukramaṇī* of Kātyāyana. Of the two Śaunakian texts, being tables of the seers of the *Ṛgveda* from beginning to end, the first one has now become defunct; but quotations from it are still available elsewhere. One such quotation, concerning Śunaka and Gṛtsamada, is found in Ṣaḍguruśiṣya's *Vedārthadīpikā*, a commentary on the *Sarvānukramaṇī*, and we will come to it presently. In the preface to the second *maṇḍala*, the *Ārṣānukramaṇī* says—

ṛṣir=Gṛtsamado nāma vijñeyaḥ sa ca Śaunakaḥ |
aurasaḥ Śunahotrasya Śunakasy=aiva kṛtrimaḥ ||
tasmād=Āṅgirasaḥ pūrvaṁ paścāt=sa Bhṛgutāṁ gataḥ ||

The *Sarvānukramaṇī* of Kātyāyana, on this point, states—

ya Āṅgirasaḥ Śaunahotro bhūtvā Bhārgavaḥ Śunako='bhavat sa Gṛtsamado dvitīyaṁ maṇḍalam=apaśyat.

Commenting of this, Ṣaḍguruśiṣya in his *Vedārthadīpikā* declares—

dvitīyaṁ maṇḍalaṁ vyākhyātuṁ tad=ṛṣer=janma-vivakṣay=etihāsam=āha. Āṅgirasa-Śunahotra-putro bhūtvā yajñe='surair=gṛhīto muktaḥ. Paścād=Indreṇ=okta-Gṛtsamada-nāmā Bhṛgu-kule Śunaka-putro='bhavat sa dvitīyaṁ maṇḍalam=apaśyat. Śaunaken=āp=īdaṁ=uktam=ṛsyanukramaṇe hi.

tvaṁ=agne tu Gṛtsamadaḥ Śaunako Bhṛgutāṁ gataḥ |
Śaunahotraḥ prakṛtyā tu sa Āṅgirasa ucyate ||
vyākhyāt=eyaṁ kathā pūrvaṁ Śaunak-ācārya-varṇane ||

The last line of the quotation from the lost *Ṛṣyanukramaṇī*, in Ṣaḍguruśiṣya's commentary, evidently refers to an earlier authority, another unnamed Śaunak-ācārya, and the words *tvam=agne* there relate to the first words of the first hymn of the second *maṇḍala*, the indication being that Gṛtsamada happens to be the seer of a number of hymns that follow the one with the words *tvam=agne*. Now, from the above statements of the 4 texts including the *Vedārthadīpikā*, it becomes evident that seer Gṛtsamada, who was originally the son of some Śunahotra of the Āṅgirasa family, had later on become a Śaunaka as the adopted son of Śunaka Bhārgava, so that, from an Āṅgirasa, he had turned into a Bhārgava. It appears that the son of Śunahotra was stolen in course of a sacrifice by some Asuras, but was eventually rescued by Indra who gave him the title of Gṛtsamada. This account is further elaborated in the *Bṛhaddevatā* (IV. 66-78), another Śaunakian text dealing mainly with the deities of the *Ṛgveda*, wherein it is said that the son of Śunahotra (his personal name is nowhere given) looked like Indra in appearance and physical features, and that he so pleased his great rescuer with his hymns that Indra accepted the youngman as his friend and designated him as a great seer, giving him the title of Gṛtsamada (the one that pleases). The above evidences also indicate that the ceremony of adoption actually took place after the son of Śunahotra had become famous as a seer, and that, whatever his personal name, he was a youngman at that time. But though the Vedic texts are silent about the parentage and personal attainments of both Śunahotra and Śunaka, it seems quite logical to assume that both were reputed sages, as a great seer of the stature of Gṛtsamada could reasonably be expected to have come of a family of poets and seers, and also to have accepted, at somewhat advanced age, the fatherhood only of a very renowned sage. It also stands to reason to assume that both Śunahotra Āṅgirasa and Śunaka Bhārgava were well known to each other; they might have been very close friends, so that the ceremony of adoption could take place smoothly, with mutual consent, at some convenient time. Our investigations will show that Śunahotra was not only a Ṛgvedic seer, but also belonged to a family of very great seers,

and that Śunaka Bhārgava too was very well versed in the Vedas and was a man of great personal attainments, though not actually a seer himself.

Against this unanimous and unmistakable evidence of the Vedic exegetical texts, including the evidence of the Śrauta-sūtras cited already, the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas speak of at least 3 Gṛtsamadas and 2 Śunakas flourishing at different periods of history, though Pargiter speaks of only 2 Gṛtsamadas, the third one probably having escaped his notice—

1. Gṛtsamada, son of Śunahotra and grandson of Kṣatravṛddha, who was one of the earliest kings of the Kāśi dynasty. Śunahotra had three sons, namely Kāśa, Śāla and Gṛtsamada. The last-named prince had a son named Śunaka, and it was from him that the Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras professing the Gotra-name of Śaunaka originated.[1] If this evidence were correct, both Gṛtsamada and his son, Śunaka, professed the same *gotra* whatever that might have been.

2. Gṛtsamada, son of some Vītahavya or Vaitahavya king of the Haihaya-Yādava dynasty. This Gṛtsamada has been called a Ṛgvedic seer, and the genealogy given shows Śunaka as his desendant in the 14th step (*Mahābhārata*, Anuśāsana-parvan, Chapter 30). It is said here that Śunaka's son was Śaunaka, from whom came the Śaunakas. This *Mahābhārata* Chapter also gives the story of the conversion of the Vaitahavya king into a Bhārgava Brāhmaṇa overnight. Being defeated in a bloody battle by Pratardana, prince of the Kāśi dynasty, the king had taken shelter, with the remnants of his family, in the hermitage of some Bhārgava sage that possibly lay near by. When that prince came to the hermitage and demanded delivery of the refugee and his family, the Bhārgava sage declared that the defeated Vaitahavya king had already become a Brāhmaṇa by discarding his Kṣatriyahood for ever. The Purāṇas do not mention any Vaitahavya or Vītahavya as king of the Haihaya-Yādava main line; but they mention one Vītihotra as a descendant

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1 *Vāyu*, 92. 2-4; *Brahmāṇḍa*, III. 67. 2-4; *Brahma*, 11. 31-33; *Harivaṁśa*, I. 29. 5-8.

of Arjuna Kārtavirya, and it is quite possible that Vītahavya, as a son or descendant or near kinsman of this Vītihotra, might have been ruling in the eastern provinces of the then Haihaya-Yādava empire. The Vaitahavya dynasty apparently ended with the conversion of the refugee king and his family into Kṣatra-Brāhmaṇas under the Bhārgava group. The *Mahābhārata* account seems true as it finds confirmation from at least two hymns of the *Atharvaveda*. The Yādavas were proverbially notorious for their pride and scanty regard for the Brāhmaṇas. Like their ancestors, the sons of Arjuna Kārtavīrya, who had killed old Jamadagni Bhārgava and carried away his cow, the Vaitahavyas, too, are said to have lifted the sacred cow of some Bhārgava sage and probably also to have eaten the flesh thereof. This sacrilegious act had doubtless developed into a matter of common discussion, so as to form the subject-matter of at least two hymns of the *Atharvaveda*—

Ye sahasram=arājann=āsan daśa-śatā uta |
te Brāhmaṇasya gāṁ jagdhvā Vaitahavyāḥ parābhavan ||
gaur=eva tān hanyamānā Vaitahavyān=avātirat | (V. 18.10-11)

The Vaitahavyas, who ruled over a thousand people and were themselves quite numerous (literally, one thousand in number), came to ruin having killed (and probably also devoured) the sacred cow of a Brāhmaṇa. The cow herself, being slain, pulled down the Vaitahavyas as it were.

The Sṛñjayas and the Vaitahavyas waxed excessively in power and pride, which almost touched the sky; but they came to ruin having injured a Bhārgava sage [by killing his cow]—

atimātram=avardhanta nodiva divam=aspṛśan |
Bhṛguṁ hiṁsitvā Sṛñjayā Vaitahavyāḥ parābhavan || (V. 19.1)

3. Gṛtsamada, said to have been a son of *Rājarṣi* Suhotra, descendant of Bharata-Bharadvāja and ruler of Pratiṣṭhāna (Prayāga or Allahabad). Purāṇic genealogy shows this Gṛtsamada as a grandson of Bṛhatkṣatra[2] and as a Gotra-originator, though no reference to Śunaka as his son or descendant is made.

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2 *Brahma Purāṇa*, 13.62-63; *Harivaṁśa*, I.20. 15-16 and I.32. 19-20.

The above evidences show that the first Gṛtsamada was a son of Śunahotra of the Kāśi dynasty, the second, a son of some refugee Vaitahavya king of the Haihaya-Yādava group, and the third, a son of the royal sage Suhotra of the Bharata-Bharadvāja line of Pratiṣṭhāna. The Gotra-name of the first is unknown, while the second was apparently a Bhārgava by reason of conversion. One of the two is declared to have been the father, while the other is shown as an ancestor of Śunaka, not son or descendant, and both the pairs of Gṛtsamada and Śunaka may be said to have professed the same *gotras*, whatever these were. On the other hand, it is the third Gṛtsamada, who as a descendant of Bharadvāja, had direct connection with the Āṅgirasas, and it is he alone, who comes nearest to Gṛtsamada Śaunahotra of the Vedic texts. As is well known, the Bharadvājas happen to be an offshoot of the Āṅgirasa group of Brāhmaṇas. We have already noted that, according to the unanimous evidence of the Śaunakian texts, the *Sarvānukramaṇī* of Kātyāyana and its commentary, the *Vedārthadīpikā* of Ṣaḍgurusiṣya, Gṛtsamada was the son of some Śunahotra Āṅgirasa, and was later on adopted as a son by Śunaka Bhārgava. It is thus evident that the *Sūtas* and Purāṇa-teachers of ancient India were, for some reason or other, unable to gather authentic information about Śunaka and Gṛtsamada, and this fact probably resulted in their giving different stories at different places. As against these idefinite statements, we have the clear and definite statements of the Vedic exegetical texts, which, however meagre in details, appear quite reasonable and dependable. Particularly, the evidence of the Śaunakas themselves on the matter can, by no means, be underestimated. And here also, significantly enough, we have confirmation from at least two Purāṇas, the *Brahma* and the *Harivaṃśa*.

We have already noted that, beyond giving the family-names of Śunaka and Śunahotra, the Vedic texts do not say a word about their parentage. The matter, therefore, still remains open. In view, however, of the statements of the *Brahma* and *Harivaṃśa Purāṇas*, the matter relating to the parentage of Śunahotra no longer remains a difficult problem. The two Purāṇas, of course, wrongly call Gṛtsamada a son of king

Suhotra : but the truth probably is that it was Śunahotra, father of Gṛtsamada who actually happened to be a son or grandson of Suhotra, so that the seer Gṛtsamada was a grandson or great-grandson of Suhotra. The 6th *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgveda*, which is otherwise known as the *Bharadvāja-maṇḍala*, incorporates the hymns of seer Bharadvāja (stated to have been the adopted son of Bharata) and his descendants. The hymns of the seers Suhotra (VI. 31-32), Śunahotra (VI. 33-34), Nara (VI 35-36), Garga (VI. 47) and others, all descendants of Bharata-Bharadvāja, are found here, and these are mainly in praise of Indra. The close juxtaposition of these hymns as well as their subject-matter, may be an indication that the seers concerned were not far removed from one another. It has been noted that the son of Śunahotra became famous as Gṛtsamada by his praise of Indra. The identity of Śunahotra Āṅgirasa may thus be regarded as established, and our supposition that a poet and seer like Gṛtsamada must have been born in a family of seers is also established. According to Pargiter's genealogical table of the royal dynasties, Suhotra stands 5th or 6th in descent from Bharata. Śunahotra, father of Gṛtsamada, probably comes a generation or two later, so that he may be said to stand 7th or 8th from Bharata. Śunaka Bhārgava, as a friend of Śunahotra, also belongs to the same generation.

We may now consider who exactly Śunaka Bhārgava was, and where he might possibly have been living. It may be reasonably assumed that he was not living far away from Śunahotra, an inhabitant of Pratiṣṭhāna. The *Mahābhārata* account, cited above, shows that the Vaitahavyas were in occupation of a large part of the Kāśī region, and the Bhārgava hermitage giving shelter to the defeated king was not far off from Kaśī. It seems probable that Śunaka Bhārgava might either belong to this family of the Bhārgavas, or to some other family living close by, while the Neo-Bhārgavas headed by Vaitahavya were continuing independently as a distinct Kṣatra-Brāhmaṇa branch. Kāśī and Pratiṣṭhāna are contiguous territories. Pargiter's table shows Pratardana as anterior to Bharata, son of Duṣyanta-Śakuntalā, by a few generations. His contemporary Bhārgava sage giving shelter to the Vaitahavya king

was doubtless older than he by a generation or two, so that Śunaka Bhārgava, as a contemporary of Śunahotra, might stand 11th or 12th in the descending order from him. If this dating be correct or approximate, both Śunaka and Śunahotra may be said to have flourished some 12 or 13 generations earlier than king Daśaratha of Ayodhyā.

Now to come to the question of the parentage of Śunaka Bhārgava. It appears, from the very brief account of the Bhṛgu family given in the *Mahābhārata*[3] by Sauti Ugraśravas, at the request of his chief listener, *Kulapati* Śaunaka, that one Pramati was born in the line of Cyavana Bhārgava. This Pramati had a son called Ruru, by his wife, Ghṛtācī, an Apsaras (nymph). By his wife, Pramadvarā, another Apsaras, Ruru begot Śunaka who was brought up in the hermitage of the sage Sthūlakeśa,[4] and it was this Śunaka who happened to be the originator, the grand-patriarch, of the Śaunaka family—

Ruror=api suto jajñe Śunako Veda-pāragaḥ |
Pramadvarāyāṁ dharm-ātmā tava pūrva-pitāmahaḥ || 10
tapasvī ca yaśasvī ca śrutavān=Brahmavittamaḥ |
dhārmikaḥ satyavādī ca niyato niyat-āśanaḥ || 11

In other words, this Śunaka happened to be a very pious and famous sage, given to penances, well versed in the Vedas, and foremost among the knowers of self (*Brahman*). Gṛtsamada, son of Śunahotra, could thus have no objection to, or hesitation in, accepting a very senior and learned sage as his father, a great seer though he was already.

Here ends the brief history of the origin of the house of the Śunakas or Śaunakas, which, as an offshoot of the far-famed Bhārgava group, produced not only Vedic seers and very famous sages from time to time, but also a galaxy of renowned Vedic teachers whose works are still read with care and revered by millions of students of the Vedas throughout the world.

Both Vedic and Purāṇic traditions regard the Śaunakas as Kṣatra-Brāhmaṇas. Śunaka Bhārgava might have been

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3 I. 5. 7-9.
4 I. 7.

called a pure Brāhmaṇa, though his father and grandfather happened to have wives of the semi-divine Apsaras group; but his adopted son, seer Gṛtsamada, doubtless came of a family of Brahma-Kṣatras, if not of pure Kṣatriyas. In this way, the line of Śunaka Bhārgava had turned into a mixed line of Brahma-Kṣatras or Kṣatra-Brāhmaṇas. According to the Śrautasūtras of Baudhāyana and Āpastamba, the Śunaka-gotra has only one Ārṣeya-pravara, namely, Śaunaka or Gṛtsamada. The *Āśvalāyana Śrautasūtra*, however, says that the *gotra* has one *pravara*, or, alternatively, 3 *pravaras*, the latter being Bhārgava, Śaunaka and Gārtsamada. This indicates that originally there happened to be two branches among the Śunakas, one professing only one Pravara-name, the other three. Later on an offshoot, called the Śaunaka-gotra, also developed, the originator here probably being *Kulapati* Śaunaka of Naimiṣ-āraṇya mentioned above. His title of *Kulapati* is indeed very significant, and it may be that his direct descendants, after the lapse of a few generations, had begun to name themselves after that great patriarch. With the dispersal of the Śunaka families to different places in course of time, their Pravara-names too appear to have undergone some alterations. At the moment, the Śaunaka families, professing at least 5 sets of Pravara-names, may be found, namely, (1) Śaunaka or Gṛtsamada, (2) Bhārgava, Śaunaka and Gārtsamada (as in the Śrauta texts), (3) Sunaka, Śaunaka and Gṛtsamada, (4) Bhārgava, Śaunahotra and Gārtsamada, and (5) Śunaka, Sauhotra and Gṛtsamada. The Śaunaka-gotra, which is not mentioned in the Śrauta texts, possibly because of its inception at a much later date, also has 3 Pravara-names, namely, Śaunaka, Śaunihotra and Gṛtsamada. There is no material difference among these sets of Pravara-names. Śaunahotra and Śaunihotra may be regarded as identical, while Gārtsamada is a derivative of Gṛtsamada, meaning the son or descendant of Gṛtsamada. The word *Sauhotra*, in the 5th set of Pravara-names of the Śunaka-gotra, is of very special significance, proving beyond doubt that Śunahotra, father of the seer Gṛtsamada, was actually a son or grandson or descendant of king Suhotra. Among the Vaidika Brāhmaṇas of Bengal, who originally came from the west (probably Kanauj and other

places of Northern India), are found families professing both the Śunaka and Śaunaka-gotras.

The *Mahābhārata* account,[5] concerning the overthrow of the Vaitahavya dynasty and its extinction as a ruling line, seems true, confirmed as it is also by Vedic evidence already quoted above; but its indication that the line of Vaitahavya later on had come to be known as Śaunaka, from his descendants, Gṛtsamada and Śunaka, has no foundation. On the contrary, there is strong evidence to show that the descendants of Vaitahavya, the Neo-Brāhmaṇas of the Bhārgava group, later came to be known as the Yaskas or Yāskas, after a very prominent descendant, the sage Yaska. Yaska is cited in the Śrautasūtras as a Gotra-name under the Bhārgavas, with the 3 *pravaras*—Bhārgava, Vaitahavya and Sāvedasa. The author of the *Nirukta* text, that we have now, was a remote descendant of Vaitahavya and Yaska. The Yaskas, like the Śunakas, have everywhere been called Kṣatra-Brāhmaṇas.

One Gṛtsamada of some ruling Kṣatriya family, and a great seer of many Ṛgvedic hymns, had become a Bhārgava Brāhmaṇa and the head of a very renowned family. This probably was the tradition. There was perhaps a Gṛtsamada among the earliest princes of the Kāśi dynasty, a descendant of Kṣatravṛddha. A second Gṛtsamada happened to be a descendant of king Bṛhatkṣatra of the Bharata family of Partiṣṭhāna. Some Vaitahavya king of the Haihaya-Yādava line had also become a Bhārgava Brāhmaṇa by overnight conversion. Lastly, there was a Śunaka-gotra, with the name of Gṛtsamada as a *pravara*. All these facts probably got mixed up in course of time, causing confusion and bewilderment among the later *Sūtas* and Purāṇa-teachers themselves, so that different statements concerning the same subject, are now met with in different texts. Pargiter, a foreign scholar unacquainted with the correct Indian tradition regarding *gotras* and *pravaras*, got puzzled, and was compelled to conclude that "there were two Gṛtsamadas and two Śunakas,

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5 XIII. 30.

and therefore two Śunaka-gotras".[6] There might have been several Gṛtsamadas and several Śunakas, not to speak of only two, flourishing at different periods, in different families, so as to have common names is not an unusual thing; but it has now been shown that there happened to be only one Śunaka and one Gṛtsamada in the Bhārgava line, and hence there was, and still is, only one Śunaka-gotra, not two. It has also been shown that the Śaunaka-gotra of later origin was nothing but an offshoot of the main Śunaka-gotra.

The evidences of the Śrauta texts, in matters of *gotras* and *pravaras*, are indeed invaluable, showing as they do the actual family affiliations of the ancient sages. They preserve the names not only of the originators of the ancient *gotras*, but also those of the prominent sages and personages under each family, who are sometimes met with in various Vedic texts as seers, or teachers of various Vedic schools. Needless to say, these lists were not prepared from mere second-hand information, or from hearsay, as was very probably the case with the preparation of the genealogies of the *Ṛṣis* by the *Sūtas* and Purāṇa-teachers, generally living in cities and capitals, under the protection of their royal patrons. Citation of *gotra-pravara* names, in the beginning of any sacrifice or ceremony, is regarded in India as an essential part of the function from time immemorial, although the practice really means mention of the actual lineage, or identification of the family, of the person or persons taking part in it, and it is not difficult to imagine that, before *gotras* as such came to existence, family-names, with the names of the prominent personages of the past ages, used to be cited during sacrifices and other ceremonies.

The genealogy of the Śunakas is not given here; but it may be mentioned incidentally that Pargiter's "Chronological Table of Ṛṣis"[7] does not at all mention the 3 seers of the second *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgveda* either under the Bhārgavas or under the Śaunakas; neither does it mention any of the seers of the

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6 *Anc. Ind. Hist. Trad.*, p. 201.
7 *Op. cit.*, pp. 191-92.

Atharvaveda. Among the famous Śaunaka sages and teachers, only two are mentioned, although the Vedic texts mention several by name, besides the others referred to by their surnames only. Mention of some Śaunaka teachers and sages is also found in the *Atharva-pariśiṣṭa*. The authors of the Vedic *Anukramaṇīs*, too, are conspicuously absent in that table. The task of preparing a much more comprehensive table is not an impossibility, though it may, particularly the datings, prove very difficult. The same may be said about the chronological tables of some other Ṛṣi-families as well, namely, those of Vasiṣṭha, Viśvāmitra, Bhṛgu, Aṅgiras, Atri and others. Besides the Epics and the Purāṇas, some Vedic texts particularly are replete with the personal names of many ancient seers and sages, and they contain some very useful historical references leading to identity and approximate dating in several cases. A tentative table, to serve as a working hypothesis, may thus be prepared without very much difficulty. The trouble of the indiscriminate use of Gotra-names, in preference to personal ones, is there; but one will have to proceed with caution, to avoid overlappings and misplacements.

IX

The Hūṇas in the Purāṇas[1]

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An account of the relations between the Indian and Western civilisations in ancient times is indeed the fascinating story of a period of about a thousand years, which begins in the first century B.C. with the establishment of the so-called Indo-Scythian dominion and bears as its distinguishing mark the subjection of the extreme north-west of India to tribes which came from the regions of Central Asia. It was in that region that three great civilisations—the Classical, the Indian and the Iranian—have crossed one another and have left their imperishable impress on the history of the ancient world. The Persians, the Śaka-Scythians, the Indo-Greeks, the Parthians and the Kuṣāṇas came and dominated the political scene of India for about five hundred years and the latter were followed by a more formidable and ferocious race that immediately succeeded them as conquerors in North-Western India. They are commonly known as the Hūṇas or the White Huns or Ephthalites whose part in Indian history commenced from about the middle of the fifth century A.D. and continued for about a hundred years.

The great upsurge of the Hūṇas literally knocked the two great continents of Asia and Europe out of bottom, and paralysed the peaceful and cultured life of millions of people for a pretty long time. Like meteors they shot up into the sky and soon vanished into nothingness. Born believers in blood and iron, the Hūṇas swooped down upon the plains of Asia and Europe

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1 [The author sent his paper, but could not attend the Seminar. The subject of the paper falls outside the scope of the Seminar—Ed.]

and carried horrible deaths and devastations with them. Their violent outbrust resembled something like volcanic eruption in the history of the human race, and, like a veritable strain of lava, they issued forth from their homeland and spread over Europe and Asia. "Homeless and lawless, they rode their horses awake and asleep. Their fierce yells spread terror wherever they were heard and they engaged all the civilised peoples of the world in fearful cataclysmic war."[2]

II

It was in the wake of their invasion of Persia that the Hūṇas first made their appearance on the Indian political scene. Defeated and subdued by Kubad, the Persian monarch, the Ephthalites diverted their attention elsewhere and consequently got deeply involved in Indian affairs. From the Chinese chronicles we learn that they commenced their career of conquest in this region by invading and capturing Gandhāra in North-Western India about 465 A.D. then ruled over by the Kuṣāṇas, by either Kidāra or one of his successors, who had earlier been expelled from Bactria by the same Ephthalites at the time of the latter's conquest of Southern Turkistan. Their prolonged fight with the Persians had naturally brought them in close contact with the Indian borderland which then presented the spectacle of a house divided against itself—too vulnerable to escape the notice of a daring and conquering race like them. Thus, by the end of the fifth century A.D., the White Huns came to stay as a potential factor to be reckoned with in Indian politics.

The story of this spectacular achievement of the Hūṇas in India is yet to be told, and no serious attempt was made in this field so far.[3] A close examination of all available evidences bearing on their origin enables us to conclude that the Huns of

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2 *HCIP*, Vol. III, Intro., p. xv.

3 Thakur, *The Hūṇas in India*, Varanasi, 1967.

Attila who dominated Europe and the White Huns who subsequently happened to rule over the major portions of North-Western and Western India for some time were two different branches of the same race which traced their descent from the Turanian family of the Turks. In this connection, we have a very useful guide in the name 'Hun' itself as applied to the Ephthalites. The Byzantine historians probably had the European Huns in their mind and employed the name in a generic sense, without real ethnological grounds, and Procopius, the first of these historians to use the name 'White Hun', lived fully a hundred years after the days of Attila.[4]

Further we have also to explain the singular use of the Sanskrit name *Hūṇa* to designate this people, if not on the ground that the name became familiar there just in consequence of the White Hun inroad.

The earlier mention of this name we have in the Bhitari pillar inscription of Skandagupta during whose time the Hūṇas made their first appearance in India. Yaśodharman also uses the same name to designate the White Huns in his Mandasor inscription[5] which glorifies his triumph over Mihirakula. M. Specht in his note on the name written as *Hoa* or *Hoa-tun* has convincingly suggested that the Chinese sources apply the name Hun to the Ye-tha or Ephthalites.[6] Thus we find that there is a uniform application of the name Hūṇa or Hun to the Ephthalites in Greek, Indian and Chinese records alike. It probably shows that the designation was current among the nation itself, which means that the Ephthalites stood in close ethnological connection with the European Huns who make their appearance in history just at the same time—a conclusion which is also confirmed by philology.

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4 Stein, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

5 Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, Vol. I, p. 315.

6 *Journal Asiatique*, 1883, p. 335.

III

As noted above, the history of the Hūṇas in India is shrouded in obscurity, though we have numerous references to their activities in Indian literature as well as in epigraphic records belonging to different periods. The Chinese and the Classical sources throw interesting light on the activities of the Hūṇas in those parts of the world; but they (except Hiuen-tsang's accounts) are almost silent on their movements and activities in India. The Indian sources also do not enlighten us much on this point. They mention the Hūṇas off and on, but give us no detailed account of their activities.

The earliest mention of the Hūṇas we have, however, in the epics. In one of the Mss of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the Pahlavas and Hūṇas have been mentioned side by side.[7] We have a similar reference to them in the *Mahābhārata*.[8] The Sabhā-parvan presents the list of foreign tribes which include the Hūṇas and the Cīnas. The Bhīṣma-parvan also mentions the Hūṇas. Besides the Hūṇas, we have also reference to the Hārahūṇa in the *Mahābhārata*.[9] It has been suggested that the word *Hāra* stands for the old Persian word *Karamir* or *Kharamir* which means 'red' or 'deep colour'.[10] In other words, Hārahūṇa means 'red Hūṇa'. In another account, the 'Karamīra Hyuon' and 'Speta Hyuon' have been mentioned side by side. It is said that the Zoroastrians called their enemies, who included the Huns, 'Karamīra' because their headdress, shield and flag were all of red colour (*sukhra kulaha ut sukhra jena ut sukhra draphs*).[11] It is, however,

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7 Cf. *Petersburg Dictionary*, s.v.

8 *Mbh.* (Calcutta ed.), I. 6885; III. 1991; VI. 373.

9 *Ibid.*, II. 309; III. 11.85.

10 *Asiatica* (*Festschrift Fr. Weller*), pp. 12 ff.

11 *Bahaman-yastā*, 6.3. In this connection it is important to note that we have mention of a tribe known as Tāmraliptaka in the *Mahābhārata* (I. 147; II. 120). They seem to have been so named probably due to their red or copperish colour. In the accounts of the T'ang dynasty of China, it is stated that the Tibetans had a peculiar custom of colouring their mouth with red colour (Shafer, *Ethnography of Ancient India*, p. 134; see Buddha Prakash, *Kalidāsa aur Hūṇa*, p. 46, note 79).

interesting to note that we have no mention of the red Hūṇas elsewhere, though the White Huns or *Śveta*-Hūṇas have been frequently referred to. In fact, the Hūṇas had nothing to do with the red colour. The Persian accounts probably confused them with other invading races, who adopted red flag and red shield, with the Hūṇas. This name was later borrowed by Indian authors from the Persian chronicles and gradually found its mention in the *Mahābhārata*, and in other works. Whatever be the name, there was, however, no racial difference between the so-called Hārahūṇa and the Hūṇa. They were called White so that they could be distinguished from the Hiung-nu proper. Thus, the Hārahūṇa actually stands for the White Huns or the Hūṇas in general, who had invaded India.

Varāhamihira refers to both the Hūṇas and the White Hūṇas (*Śveta-Hūṇa*).[12] The *Mahāvastu*[13] also mentions them along with the Cīnas. While in the Sabhā-parvan, they are included in the list of the foreign tribes, in the Bhīṣma-parvan[14] they are mentioned in relation to the Persians.

Coming to the Purāṇas, we find that while they preserve detailed lists of kings belonging to different dynasties that flourished in ancient India they are not so discreet in preserving the list of the Hūṇa kings who dominated the political scene of India for about a century. They[16] mention their name (Hūṇa) in their list of peoples along with the Yavanas, Gandhāras, Sauvīras, Madrakas, Kuṇindas, Pāradas, etc. The *Brahmāṇḍa* refers to the Hārahūṇa which also finds mention in the *Mahābhārata*. The Hārahūṇas were in fact the White Huns who inhabited the Herat region. In the *Brahmāṇḍa*[17] and *Vāyu*

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12 *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*, XI. 61.

13 I. 135.

14 II. 51. 23-25 : *Hārahūṇāṁś=ca Kṛṣṇān Haimavatāṁs=tarhā.*

15 9. 65-66 : *Hūṇāḥ Pārasikaiḥ saha.*

16 *Mk*, Chap. 57 or 54. vv. 34-39; *Vāyu*, Chap. 45, vv. 108-36; *Brahmāṇḍa*, Chap. 49, vv. 44-71; *Matsya*, Chap. 114, vv. 34-56; *Vamana*, Chap. 13, vv. 36-58; also cf. Sachau, *Alb. Ind.*, I. pp. 299-300.

17 Cf. 49. 44-71.

Purāṇas,[18] we have the following—*Hūṇā Darvāḥ sa-Hūdakāḥ, Hūṇā Darvā Bahūdakāḥ, Hūṇā Dārvāḥ sa-Hūhukāḥ*.[19] The *Viṣṇu* and *Kūrma Purāṇas*[21] also refer to the Hūṇas along with the Sauvīras and the Saindhavas. Of the different readings, however, the reading *Hārahūṇa* is supported by the *Mahābhārata*.[22] The *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*[23] suggests *Hārahūra* which is also supported by the *Kāvyamīmāṃsā*.[24]

The Pāradas mentioned in the Purāṇas were the Parthians who lived in the Khorasan region. The Hārahūṇas or Hārahūras were either a branch or the White Huns themselves who are credited with having subjugated the entire area from Central Asia to Central India and beyond, about the fifth century A.D. It has been suggested that the Hārahūṇas were living in the Herat region.[25] According to the Purāṇas, "When the kingdom of the Andhras has come to an end, there will be kings belonging to the lineage of their servants : 7 Andhras and 10 Ābhīra kings, also 7 Gardabhins, 18 Śakas. There will be 8 Yavanas, 14 Tuṣāras, 13 Muruṇḍas and 11 Hūṇas."[26] The *Harṣacarita*[27] places the Hūṇas in Uttarāpatha apparently somewhere about the Western Punjab, and the Dārvas were the people of Dārvābhisāra which roughly comprised the Punch and Naoshera regions between the Jhelum and the Chenab.[28]

In the account of the fifty-six countries, mostly holy places lying in and on the borders of India, given in the *Ṣaṭpañcāddeśa-*

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18 Cf. 49. 44-71.

19 See 45. 109-36. For the variant readings, see D. C. Sircar, *Stud. Geog. Anc. Med. Ind.*, p. 24, note 4.

20 For the variant readings, see Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 36,note 8.

21 *Viṣṇu*, II. 14-17: *Kūrma*, I, Chaps. 46-47; II, Chap. 32. 11-12; *Brahma*, 21. 15-17.

22 Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 24, note 4.

23 *Loc. cit.*

24 Moti Chandra, *Geog. Ec. Stud.*, pp. 66, 27-28, 31-32.

25 Cf. Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 27, note 2.

26 Pargiter, *DKA*, p. 72.

27 Cited by Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 27, note 2.

28 *Loc. cit.*

vibhāga in the *Śaktisaṅgama Tantra*,[29] described from the pilgrim's point of view, the Hūṇa country is mentioned. Similar lists are also found in some other works, mostly Tāntric, and the majority of the localities are the Śaiva and Śākta *tīrthas* which definitely indicate Tāntric influence. The earliest work containing a list of fifty-six countries seems to be the *Candragarbhasūtra* or *Candragarbhavaipulya*[30] which mentions them in connection with the Buddha's manifestations in Jambūdvīpa. Cf. the *Sammoha Tantra* (composed before 1450 A.D.)[31] which gives two lists of the countries.[32] The Hūṇa-deśa is placed to the south of the Kāmagiri and to the north of the Maru-deśa,[33] i.e., the desert, and is called the land of heroes. This list is further supported by the *Harṣacarita*, noted above, which places the Hūṇa country in the Punjab region, practically suggesting the same area. Thus, the Hūṇas or Hārahūṇas of the *Mahābhārata* may be equated with the Himalayan people divided into various groups. Strīrājya was known to the *Mahābhārata* which lay between the Hūṇa land and Taṅgana, i.e. in the trans-Himalyan region also known to Varāhamihira and Kalhaṇa. Moreover, in the records of the Pratihāras, Kalacuris and others, we have mention of the Hūṇa royal houses and they were ultimately regarded as one of the thirty-six clans of the Rajputs.

The Hūṇas figure prominently in the list of the countries described in Kālidāsa's *Raghuvaṁśa* as having been conquered and subdued by Raghu in the course of his *digvijaya*. The description of the *Raghuvaṁśa* was imitated by a later *praśastikāra* at the Paramāra court who describes the Paramāra

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29 *Śaktisaṅgama Tantra*, Bk. III, Chap. VII. The work was composed sometime before 1744 A.D. (Sircar, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70).

30 Translated into Chinese by Narendrayaśas in 5[c]6 A.D.

31 P. K. Gode, *ABORI*, Vol. XIX, pp. 184 ff.

32 Cf. Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

33 *Ṣatpañcāśaddeśavibhāga*, verses 43-44 in Sircar, *op. cit.*, pp. 78, 101.

34 *Mbh.*, III. 51; XII. 4. 114.

35 *Raghuvaṁśa*, IV. 67-68.

king Lakṣmadeva as having defeated Aṅga and Kaliṅga in the east, Cola and Pāṇḍya as far the Tāmraparṇī river in the south, and the Turuṣkas on the banks of the Vaṁkṣu in the north, with a difference that the Hūṇas have been substituted here by the Turuṣkas[36] who probably signified the Hūṇas in his time.

From the description of Kālidāsa, it is clear that the north-west and the northern lands beyond were held by the Pārasikas, Hūṇas and Kambojas. In other words, in the time of Kālidāsa, the Hūṇas were settled in the Doab formed by the tributaries of the Oxus, to which Kṣīrasvāmin also attests,[37] and had not reached the confines of India proper during this time—a fact which is confirmed by the history of the Oxus region itself wherein we have no mention of the Hūṇas from about the second century B.C. to the third century A.D. Their presence in that region during this period is not supported by any evidence whatsoever. Their mention in the *Raghuvaṁśa* clearly indicates that they made their presence felt in the region and outside by the fourth century A.D. and not before. In the Sabhā-parvan of the *Mahābhārata*, we have a detailed description of Arjuna's conquests in the north-western regions where the Vālhīkas Daradas, Kambojas, Lohas, Parama-Kambojas and Ṛṣikas are said to have fought against him.[38] But the Hūṇas have not been referred to in this connection.

On the basis of the above evidences, it may be suggested that there was no Ephthalite settlement in India proper up to 500 A.D. though they had by this time settled down as a powerful political force in the Oxus region whence they often directed their devastating raids on the Indian soil. Their empire in 500 A.D. comprised Tokhāristān, Kābulistān, and Zabulistān, but included no part of India proper. Their advance was restricted by king Fīrūz of Persia; but, on his death in 484 A.D., they moved forward, stormed the region father east and established

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36 Cf. the Nagpur *praśasti* (1104-05 A.D.) of Naravarmadeva in *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. II, p. 188.

37 K. G. Oka's ed., p. 110; *Raghuvaṁśa*, IV. 67.

38 *Mbh.*, 2. 22-27.

their headquarters at Herat. Their movement always carried with it the horrors of death and terrible devastations reflecting their demoniac ruthlessness. They completely destroyed the Kuṣāṇa power, overwhelmed the kingdom of Gandhāra, which they made their base, and finally started on their long-cherished mission of conquering India. The story of their fights and consequent occupation of a part of India, though transitory in nature, constitutes a very significant chapter in the history of ancient India, for they played no insignificant part in this land and, growing from a very dubious origin in a distant land, they succeeded in establishing a very big empire from Central Asia to the confines of Magadha, if not farther east.

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ADDENDA ET CORRIGENDA

Page 20, note 7, line 4.—*Add*—The Purāṇas also quote variously the duration of the reigns of 22 Bārhadrathas 5 Pradyotas and 10 Śaiśunāgas, flourishing in Magadha between the Bhārata War and the rise of the Nandas, as 1408 (940+138+330), 1498 (1000+138+360) and 938 (723+52+163) years. See Pargiter *AIHT*, p. 197.

.. 52, line 29.—Read—*Nāgasāhvaye*

.. 54, line 24.—*Read*—from early 6th century

.. 56, line 10.—*Read*—beginning

.. .. line 12.—*Read*—Hst. I

.. 57, line 9.—*Read*—erosional

.. 63, line 27.—*Read*—accommodate

.. 65, line 13.—*Read*—5th-2nd centuries

.. 68, line 6.—*Read*—unthinkable

.. 72, line 15.—*Read*—Ghaggar

.. 80, line 27.—*Read*—Maheshwar

.. 82, line 24.—*Read*—Painted Grey

.. 109, note 15, line 3.—*Read*—Meghavāhana

.. 115, line 1.—*Add Editorial Note*—The author writes *Āndhra* as common in Telugu, though it is generally *Andhra* in the Purāṇic texts.

.. 139, line 9.—*Read*—Napoleon

.. 149, note 39, line 1.—*Read*—Majumdar

.. 175, lines 14-17.—*Add Editorial Note*—The statement seems to conflict with those at p. 181, lines 25-30.

.. 153, line 4.—*Read* none *for* one

16-5-69